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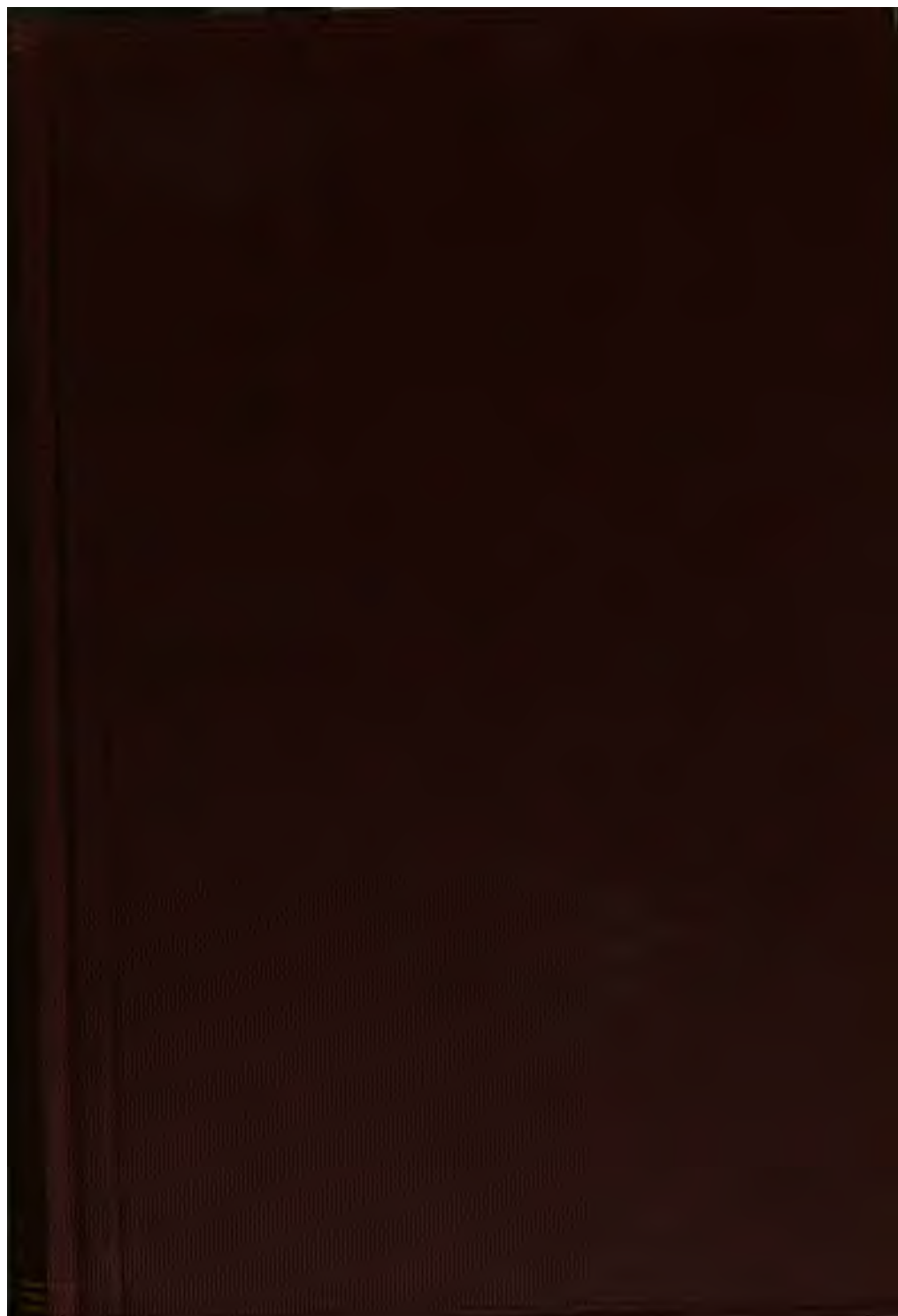
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RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

BY

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To
My Friend and Colleague
Thomas Arkle Clark

PREFACE

All that the author feels called upon to say in anticipation of the charge that he has added one more to the already overcrowded list of text-books on rhetoric is that it was intended primarily for use in his own classes. As no existing text-book seemed quite to meet the needs of these classes, he endeavored to supply that need himself. Hence the appearance of this book.

To preceding writers on the same subject the author is, needless to say, under great obligations. Among those from whom he has derived most assistance he would mention in particular A. S. Hill, Barrett Wendell, J. F. Genung, Arlo Bates, F. N. Scott, J. V. Denney, and A. G. Newcomer.

To his colleague, Dean Thomas Arkle Clark of the University of Illinois, and to Professor M. G. Fulton of the Central University of Kentucky, the writer also wishes to express his obligations for assistance and timely suggestions.

CONTENTS

PART I. — GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY

SECTION	PAGE
1. Definition of rhetoric	3
2. Rhetoric distinguished from grammar	4
3. Rhetoric concerned only with the manner of discourse ..	5
4. The use of models in learning to write	6
5. Precept and practice in writing	7

CHAPTER II. THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

9. The structural units of the discourse	10
10. The purpose of the discourse	10
11. Selection of the material	11
12. Sources whence material may be derived	11
13. The importance of individuality	12
14. Unity of the discourse	15
15. The theme of the discourse	16
16. The title of the discourse	17
17. Arrangement of the material	18
18. Coherence in the discourse	18
19. Planning the discourse	19
20. Transitions	24
21. Proportion in the discourse	25
22. The beginning	26
23. The ending	27

CHAPTER III. THE PARAGRAPH

24. Definition	32
25. Reasons for paragraphing	32
26. Classification	34
27. Structure of the paragraph	38
28. Unity in the paragraph	38

SECTION	PAGE
29. Coherence in the paragraph	41
30. The typical paragraph scheme	43
31. Methods of developing the topic	45
32. Maintaining the point of view	49
33. Parallel construction in the paragraph	50
34. Proportion in the paragraph	53
35. Emphasis in the paragraph	54
 CHAPTER IV. THE SENTENCE	
36. Definition	58
37. Classification of sentences according to grammatical structure	58
38. Unity in the sentence	61
39. Length of the sentence	65
40. Coherence in the sentence	68
41. Grammatical errors	68
42. Loose construction	73
43. Faulty punctuation	76
44. Emphasis in the sentence	78
45. Classification of sentences based on the principle of sus- pense	80
46. The periodic sentence	80
47. The loose sentence	82
48. The balanced sentence	83
49. Variety in sentence structure	83
 CHAPTER V. WORDS AND PHRASES	
50. Style	89
51. The choice of words	90
52. Clearness	90
53. Accuracy	95
54. Force	100
55. Phrasing	107
56. Conciseness	108
57. Congruity	110
58. Euphony	111
59. Variety	114

CONTENTS

ix

PART II. — THE TYPE-FORMS OF PROSE DISCOURSE

CHAPTER VI. CLASSIFICATION OF COMPOSITIONS

SECTION	PAGE
60. Classification of compositions	121

CHAPTER VII. DESCRIPTION

61. Definition	125
62. Relation to other forms of discourse	126
63. Kinds of description	130
64. Scientific description	130
65. The method of scientific description	131
66. Artistic description	132
67. Selection and arrangement of details	133
68. The point of view	134
69. Movement in description	139
70. Indirect description	144
71. Vividness in description	146

CHAPTER VIII. NARRATION

72. Definition	151
73. Relation to other forms of discourse	153
74. Kinds of narration	154
75. Elements of narration	155
76. Plot	155
77. Characterization	159
78. Setting	164
79. The point of view in narration	167
80. Selection of material	169
81. Order of events	171
82. Movement and suspense	172
83. Dialogue	176
84. The ending	176

CHAPTER IX. EXPOSITION

85. Definition	179
86. Relation to other forms of discourse	181
87. Kinds of exposition	182

SECTION	PAGE
88. Exposition by definition	183
89. Kinds of definitions	186
90. Requisites of a good definition	188
91. Methods of exposition by definition	190
92. Exposition by classification	194
93. Generalization	195
94. Division	197
95. Requisites of a good classification	199
96. Partition	202
97. Necessity of clearness in exposition	203

CHAPTER X. ARGUMENTATION

98. Definition	206
99. Difference between argumentation and exposition	206
100. Ways in which belief may be induced	208
101. Persuasion	209
102. Conviction	210
103. The proposition	210
104. Importance of making clear the point at issue	212
105. Methods of reasoning	212
106. Deductive reasoning	214
107. Inductive reasoning	221
108. The hypothesis	224
109. Verification	225
110. Evidence	227
111. Kinds of arguments	228
112. Refutation	234
113. Fallacies	235

APPENDIX I. PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION	243
APPENDIX II. WORDS AND PHRASES COMMONLY MISUSED ..	249

Part I
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Part I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1. Definition of rhetoric.—Rhetoric may be regarded either as a science or as an art. As a science, its business is to discover and formulate the principles which underlie all effective discourse. Nowadays, however, it is seldom or never regarded in the light of a pure science and studied for its own sake. It is studied almost wholly for the sake of its bearing upon the practical question of learning how to write; that is to say, it is regarded almost universally as an art rather than as a science.

Various definitions of rhetoric have been given. In the *Century Dictionary*, for example, it is defined thus: "Rhetoric is that art which consists in a systematic use of the technical means of influencing the minds, imaginations, emotions, and actions of others by the use of language." A briefer definition is that

of Professor Genung. "Rhetoric," he says, "is the art of adapting discourse, in harmony with its subject and occasion, to the requirements of a reader or hearer."¹ More briefly still it may be defined as *the art which deals with the effective communication of thought and emotion by means of words.*

2. **Rhetoric distinguished from grammar.** — The ability to write well presupposes the ability to use language in accordance with the laws of grammar. To communicate thought, the language used must be intelligible, — that is, the words and the constructions in which they are employed must be such as are familiar to those addressed. If the mere communication of thought were all that the writer concerned himself about, the use of familiar words and the observance of the rules of grammar would be the only things required of him. Seldom, however, is the writer content with the mere communication of his thought. Ordinarily, he wishes to do more than that, — to influence, move, or persuade his readers. In doing this, he will find that some words and some ways of arranging them, within the limits set by the rules of grammar, are better than others. To produce a given effect, therefore, he must study the means required for producing that effect. Here is where rhetoric comes to his aid. Grammar gives him simply the facts of language; rhetoric goes further and teaches him how he may use those facts for the purpose of producing a given effect.

¹ *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, p. 1.

Rhetoric, therefore, in no way takes the place of grammar. On the contrary, it presupposes grammar. Its use is to serve as a sort of supplement to the latter. Grammar concerns itself solely with the forms of words and their constructions in sentences. A knowledge of these facts is necessary in order to be able to write intelligibly; but that knowledge, though necessary, is not of itself sufficient to enable one to write well. Language may be grammatical, yet at the same time ineffective in communicating thought. Thus the sentence, "Brutus assassinated Cæsar because he wished to be king," is grammatically faultless, but rhetorically bad, because it fails to make clear who wished to be king.

The rules of grammar derive their authority entirely from usage, and are therefore purely conventional. A change in usage necessitates a change in its rules. To a certain extent, this is true of rhetoric also. In the choice of words, for instance, we are largely governed by taste, and taste changes from time to time. But for the most part the fundamental laws of rhetoric are invariable. They depend upon the laws of mind, and these laws never change.

3. **Rhetoric concerned only with the manner of discourse.**—Rhetoric concerns itself properly with the *manner*, not with the *matter* of discourse. It takes for granted that the writer has something to say before it offers to help him in expressing his thought. The first duty of one who would learn to write is, therefore, to think. Unless one thinks, indeed, it

is scarcely worth while trying to learn to write. The mere repetition of what has already been expressed is not composition. Composition is a positive building up process, and requires as its material either new thought finding expression for the first time, or old thought needing new and fresh expression.

4. **The use of models in learning to write.** — In learning to speak, we learn by imitating those whom we hear speaking; and if we are daily in the company of those who speak grammatically, we learn to speak grammatically too, because we have good models to imitate. It is much the same with writing: we learn to write by imitating good models. We may not always be conscious of this imitation, to be sure, any more than a child is conscious that it is imitating its elders when it tries to form words; but the tendency to imitate is none the less in us. Had we not models to pattern our discourse after, indeed, we should be as blind men groping for the way. "The obvious truth is," as Professor Minto says, "that a man who writes well must learn to do so by example, if not by precept. In any language that has been used for centuries as a literary instrument, the beginner cannot begin as if he were the first in the field. Whatever he proposes to write, be it essay or sermon or leading article, history or fiction, there are hundreds of things of the same kind in existence, some of which he must have read and cannot help taking more or less as patterns or models."¹

¹ See *Principles of Prose Composition*, pp. 8, 9.

5. Precept and practice in writing. — If we could be constantly in the society of good writers and have the advantage of their advice whenever we wished it, we should, possibly, be in the very best way towards acquiring a good style, provided we put their precepts into practice. The proviso is an important one. Precepts are, of course, useful, but the main reliance must always be on practice. We learn to write by actually writing, not by committing to memory rules for the guidance of writers. The beginner should come to a realization of this fact as early in his career as possible, and make up his mind to the drudgery it entails. The art of writing, like any other art, must be cultivated; and with many it demands hard study and much practice. Such a master of style as Robert Louis Stevenson, for instance, attained his mastery of the pen, as he tells us, only by dint of constant and severe practice.

"All through boyhood and youth," he says, "I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw by the roadside. I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the feature of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author . . . as that I had vowed that I would learn

to write. . . . Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. . . .

"That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write."¹

Not all good writers have learned their art in precisely this way, but it is safe to say that few writers have attained distinction without taking infinite pains with their work. Hard work intelligently directed is the main secret of success in almost any undertaking. Certainly it is so in writing; and success here is success of a kind worth striving for. "Ability to express one's thought clearly, forcibly, and with a degree of elegance — that is ability to write good English — is perhaps the highest test of mental cultivation."² It is the accomplishment which gives highest value to all other accomplishments.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. My first day at college.
2. The campus.
3. The English course in my high school.
4. Athletics in my high school.
5. My favorite study.
6. What I look forward to in my college course.
7. A boarding-house at meal-time.

¹ See *A College Magazine*.

² B. A. Hinsdale, *Teaching the Language Arts*, p. 127.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 9

8. The itinerant banana-man.
9. Life on a farm.
10. How a city is governed.
11. Uncle Sam's mints.
12. The early life of Goldsmith (see Irving's *Life of Goldsmith*).
13. Lamb's picture of his school days in Christ's Hospital (see the *Essays of Elia*).

CHAPTER II

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

9. The structural units of the discourse. — In the actual writing of every composition exceeding the limits of a single paragraph the writer has to concern himself at one and the same time with three structural units, namely, the whole composition itself, the paragraph, and the sentence. This means a constant endeavor to adapt one unit to another, to adjust one part to another and all the parts to the whole. The word "composition," indeed, literally means "putting things together," with the implication that the things so put together, taken collectively, make up a whole or unit.

That this adjustment of part to part and of parts to the whole is not a matter of mere mechanics, of simply adding sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph, any one who has ever tried his hand at writing will at once recognize. Sentences or paragraphs which are models in themselves may be far from effective when used with other sentences or paragraphs as parts of a larger whole. They must be made to fit into their places. In other words, the composition, if it is to produce any definite effect, must be made unified and coherent.

10. The purpose of the discourse. — To adapt the

part to the whole, the writer must have more or less clearly in mind the purpose for which the whole exists. He must know what it is that he wishes to do. Does he wish to explain to his friend some new doctrine or creed, or does he wish to persuade his friend to accept that doctrine or creed as his own? Upon the answer to this question will depend the character of his discourse, the nature of the material he will use, and the shape into which he will mold that material. It is the purpose or aim of the discourse which determines the nature of the parts and gives form to the whole.

11. Selection of the material.—The purpose or aim of the discourse being determined, the first great problem which confronts the writer is the selection of his material. Here the beginner must be reminded that selection implies a stock of material from which to select. It is necessary to think before one begins to write. Invention must always precede composition. As the old cookery book says, first catch your hare, then proceed to dress it. It is impossible to write a composition without ideas to start with. No amount of revision quite takes the place of a little prevision.

12. Sources whence material may be derived.—There are two sources whence a writer may derive his material. He may derive it from life or nature through his own observation or experience, or he may derive it from the writings of others. The one source is just as legitimate as the other, for reflection upon

the thought of others may be just as truly invention as direct observation. The mind invents either by direct contact with phenomena, or by reaction upon the results of the contact of other minds with phenomena. In both cases there is something added to the world's stock of ideas, which is the really important thing in writing.

A word of caution to the beginner may not be amiss here. In going to the writings of others for his material, he must be careful as to the way in which he uses that material. He is not at liberty to appropriate bodily the thought of others and give it forth as if it were his own. That is not composition, but stealing, or, as it is usually termed, plagiarism. In converting to his own uses thought not really his own the beginner may, of course, be innocent of any intention to offend, but he cannot be too careful in the matter. He should remember that if he borrows he should expect to pay interest; and the only way he can afford to do that is to put his borrowed capital to some productive use. He must see to it that he is really adding something, however little that something may be, to the world's stock of ideas. He must assimilate his borrowed thought and give it out again in new combinations, or as modified by his own thought. Then, and then only, will his borrowing be legitimate.

13. The importance of individuality.—The best advice that can be given to a beginner, apropos of the problem of getting his material, is that which urges

him to put as much of himself into his work as he can. It is the individuality of the writer that, in most cases, gives value to a piece of writing. In any case, the chances are that the closer the writer adheres to his own experience the better will his work be. With the beginner, of course, the value of his work lies rather in the discipline it gives him than in the work itself; but even here individuality is to be encouraged. Nothing develops self-confidence like the effort to stand alone, and nothing more quickly gives the beginner that sense of mastery over his material which it is the aim of every writer to possess than the practice of putting his own thought into presentable form. In remolding the thought of others, he gets inevitably some suggestions as to form from his original; but in putting the results of his own observation and experience into shape he has no such help. Here he must walk alone, and the exercise will be good for him. The difficulty most beginners experience when they try to depend upon themselves for their material is in finding something to say. They have nothing to say, they protest, when urged to make use of their own thought rather than that of others. They are, of course, mistaken. They have something to say if they only knew how to get at it; no mind is an absolute blank. If they can do nothing else, they can at least open their eyes and describe what they see. And how much there is to be seen, even in the most commonplace object, if only they knew how to see it!

John Burroughs, who has sketched for us many

charming scenes from nature, speaking of the fact that he had often been accused of romancing, of putting into his descriptions of nature what was not really there, says: "I wish to give an account of a bird or a flower or of any open-air scene or incident. My whole effort is to see the thing just as it was. I ask myself, 'Exactly how did this thing strike my mind? What was prominent? What was subordinated?' . . . I set the thing down exactly as it fell out. People say, 'I do not see what you do when I take a walk.' But for the most part they do, but the fact as it lies there in nature is crude and raw it needs to be brought out, to be passed through the heart and mind and presented in appropriate words."¹ We cannot all, to be sure, describe what we see as felicitously as does Mr. Burroughs; but none of us need say that he cannot see anything worth describing.

It is a good thing for the young writer to begin as early as possible the cultivation of habits of observation, of noting carefully the things he meets with in the world around him. This will give him a fund of material to draw upon of the very best possible kind. Even if he does not wish to rely on it exclusively, it will be found a very useful supplement to the stock of material he derives from his reading.

As to his reading, he should cultivate in that, also, habits of observation. He should read critically, or, as Emerson says, "creatively." If he is writing on a

¹ See *Indoor Studies*, p. 250.

subject that he must read up on, let him fill his mind with everything relating to it that he can lay his hands on, or, at any rate, that seems worth while; then let him turn it over in his mind, assimilate it, and reflect upon it. After this, if there is a spark of originality in him it will make itself evident.

14. Unity of the discourse.—Having secured his material, the writer's next business is to consider how it may be unified and given definite form and structure. A composition is not a mere mass of material more or less closely bearing upon the subject in hand and strung together in a haphazard way. It must have organic character. All its parts must be bound together and must contribute towards the production of some given effect. That is to say, it must have a central idea running through it and furnishing, so to speak, the thread by which the various parts are bound together, — a vital principle of unity working in and through every part and becoming evident in the whole.

This means that matter not strictly relevant to the subject in hand must be rigorously excluded from the composition. Irrelevant matter is not only useless but worse than useless. It is almost sure to cause the reader more or less confusion, and it may, at times, even prevent him from getting the true point of the discourse.

No more pertinent advice can be given to a young writer than that which counsels him to stick to his subject. If he is telling a story, let him tell

that story and no other; if he is trying to convince another person of the truth of a proposition he has laid down, let him keep to the point at issue. If he does not keep to his point, he is not likely to be either very clear or very convincing, for nothing is so destructive to effectiveness in a discourse as lack of unity.

Practically, the best way to secure unity in the composition is to narrow the subject down as much as possible. Most beginners make the mistake of writing upon subjects of too great breadth. The broader the subject, the more numerous the points of view from which it may be regarded, and hence the greater the temptation for the novice to scatter his ideas, to say a little on this, that, and the other aspect of his subject, rather than to concentrate his attention upon some one definite line of thought.

Unity requires concentration of effort on the part of the writer. It forbids him to dissipate his thought, to wander aimlessly from point to point and, as a result, arrive nowhere. It demands, rather, that he fix upon some definite point as the goal of his discourse, and that he endeavor to attain that goal.

15. The theme of the discourse.— When the subject is narrowed down to a definite proposition, that proposition is said to be the theme of the discourse. It may or may not be stated in so many words in the discourse itself. Usually, indeed, it is not stated, but in that case it must be clearly implied.

The writer himself, it should be needless to say, must always have a pretty clear conception of his

theme. If he has not, the unity of his discourse is almost sure to suffer. He will know neither what to accept nor what to reject of the material that offers itself for his use.

Suppose, for example, that his subject is, "Football as a college sport." Is he an enthusiastic admirer and supporter of the game? In that case, his theme will probably be that football is a good college sport and should be encouraged; and in selecting his material he will, naturally, use only those facts and opinions about the game which tend to support his position. If he brings in anything that makes against his view, he will bring it in solely for the purpose of explaining it away or of belittling its importance. On the other hand, if he is an opponent of the game, his procedure will, of course, be just the opposite. If, however, he takes no definite attitude towards the game and has no theme to develop, he will have no principle to guide him in the selection of his material and will not be able to decide what to use or what not to use. The effect of a composition written in this way can easily be imagined.

16. The title of the discourse. — Strictly speaking, the title is not a part of the discourse, but simply a name, a label, as it were, tacked on to show what the discourse is about. It may be the subject stated broadly or the subject narrowed down to the theme; but, as brevity is an essential characteristic of a good label, it is more often simply a short, convenient phrase as suggestive of the theme as possible. Thus,

if the subject stated broadly were, "The influence of the tariff on the steel industry of the United States," the theme might be, "The steel industry of the United States does not need the support of a high tariff," and the title simply, "The tariff and the steel industry."

17. Arrangement of the material. — The problem of arranging the material of a discourse is often a troublesome one. It is complicated by the fact that each case is apt to have its peculiarities. A given subject handled by one writer under certain conditions may need wholly different treatment from that required by the same subject handled by another writer under other conditions. The basis of all literature, as has been said, is personal experience; and as each man's experience is apt to be somewhat different from that of every other man, so each writer's manner of presenting a given subject is likely to be in some respects different from that which would be adopted by any other writer.

18. Coherence in the discourse. — No writer is a law unto himself, however. The material of every discourse must be fitted together in an orderly fashion of some kind or other. It must be made coherent. There must be no gaps or breaks in the composition. Each part must be in its proper place, — the place, that is, in which it will be most effective, — and the relation of the various parts to each other and to the whole must be made obvious. If this is not so, if there is any want of connection or break in the train

of thought, the mind of the reader will be unable to devote itself wholly to the consideration of the matter in hand, and the effectiveness of the composition will be to that extent impaired.

19. Planning the discourse.— The arrangement of the material of a discourse is, obviously, a matter requiring some forethought. Good coherence in the composition cannot be secured without a plan. It is not necessary that this plan be always committed to paper. If the writer has it clearly in mind, that, in most cases, will suffice, though the sketching or outlining of the plan of the discourse before actual composition has been begun is always advisable. A plan once formed, moreover, ought to be consistently carried out. If the writer finds cause to modify it as he proceeds with his composition, as may often happen, he should be careful to see that the change in no wise interferes with the consistency of the plan as a whole.

The precise plan to be followed in any given discourse will depend upon the nature of the subject and the conditions under which it is treated. But whatever the plan adopted, it must, in a general way, be in keeping with the natural laws of the association of ideas. Broadly stated, these laws are as follows: (1) *the law of contiguity*, — the law according to which things closely related either in time, space, or thought naturally suggest each other; (2) *the law of similarity and of contrast*, — the law according to which things naturally suggest their likes

or their opposites; and (3) *the law of cause and effect*, — the law according to which the mind naturally thinks from cause to effect or, *vice versa*, from effect to cause.

In writing history, for instance, the natural order in which to narrate the events is the chronological order, the order in which they really happened. That is to say, in narration events are grouped naturally according to their time relation. So in description, if the writer is trying to give an account of some object, he will naturally pass from one point or aspect of the object to that which is nearest to it, or which presents the greatest resemblance or contrast to it. In short, whatever the nature of the writer's discourse, he will be relating things or ideas according to one or another of the laws just mentioned.

An illustration or two will make this evident. Take the following paragraph, for example:

His room was on the north side of the street, and the morning sun shone in his window, as he lay back in the chair, grateful for its warmth. A heavy cart lumbered along slowly over the worn and irregular pavement; it came to a stand at the corner, and a gang of workmen swiftly emptied it of the steel rails it contained, dropping them on the sidewalk one by one with a loud clang which reverberated harshly far down the street. From the little knot of men who were relaying the horse-car track came cries of command, and then a rail would drop into position, and be spiked swiftly to its place. Then the laborers would draw aside while an arrested horse-car urged forward again, with the regular footfall of its one horse as audible above the mighty roar of the metropolis

as the jingle of the little bell on the horse's collar. At last there came from over the house-tops a loud whistle of escaping steam, followed shortly by a dozen similar signals, proclaiming the mid-day rest. A rail or two more clanged down on the others, and then the cart rumbled away. The workmen relaying the track had already seated themselves on the curb to eat their dinner, while one of them had gone to the saloon at the corner for a large can of the new beer advertised in the window by the gaudy lithograph of a frisky young goat bearing a plump young goddess on his back.¹

The various sights, sounds, and activities of the street are here grouped according to their relation to an observer in a window overlooking the street,—that is to say, according to the law of contiguity. The mention of one thing suggests another usually associated with it: a southern window suggests warm sunshine; a factory whistle, workmen going to their dinner; and so on.

As a further illustration, take Burroughs's essay on *Dr. Johnson and Carlyle*, the plan of which is determined by the law of contrast. Somewhat condensed, the essay proceeds as follows:

Glancing at a remark in the *London Times*, the author of *Obiter Dicta*,² in his late essay on Dr. Johnson, asks: "Is it as plain as the old hill of Howth, that Carlyle was a greater man than Johnson? Is not the precise contrary the truth?" There are very many people, I imagine, who would be slow to admit that the "precise contrary" were the truth; yet it is a question not to be decided off-hand. Both were great men, unquestionably, apart from their mere literary and

¹ Brander Matthews, *Vignettes of Manhattan*.

² Mr. Augustine Birrell.

scholastic accomplishments. Each made a profound impression by virtue of his force of character, his weight and authority as a person. . . . As regards the genius, Carlyle ranks far above Johnson.

Indeed the intellectual equipment of the two men, and the value of their contributions to literature, admit of hardly any comparison. But the question still is of the man, not of the writer. . . .

This¹ is excellently said, and is true enough. . . . If a man is born constitutionally unhappy, as both these men seem to have been, his suffering will be in proportion to the strength and vividness of the imagination; and Carlyle's imagination, compared with Johnson's, was like an Arctic night with its streaming and flashing auroras, compared with the midnight skies of Fleet Street.

Carlyle fought a Giant Despair all his life, and never for a moment gave an inch of ground. . . . Johnson fought many lesser devils, such as moroseness, laziness, irritability of temper, gloominess, and tendency to superstition. . . . What takes one in Johnson is his serious self-reproof and the perfect good faith in which he accuses himself. . . . Carlyle does not touch us in just this way, because his ills are more imaginary and his language more exaggerated. What takes one in Carlyle is the courage and helpfulness that underlie his despair, the humility that underlies his arrogance, the love and sympathy that lie back of his violent oburgations and in a way prompt them. . . .

Again, Johnson owed much more to his times than Carlyle did to his. . . .

Johnson has survived his works. . . . Our interest in the man seems likely to be perennial. . . .

Is it possible to feel as deep an interest in and admiration for Carlyle, apart from his works, as we do in Johnson? Different temperaments will answer differently. Some

¹ Referring to a quotation from Birrell.

people have a natural antipathy to Carlyle, based, largely, no doubt, on misconception. But misconception is much easier in his case than in Johnson's. He was more of an exceptional being. He was pitched in too high a key for the ordinary uses of life. He had fewer infirmities than Johnson, moral and physical. Johnson was a typical Englishman, and appeals to us by all the virtues and faults of his race. . . . Both men had the same proud independence, the same fearless gift of speech, the same deference to authority or love of obedience. . . . Yet the fact remains that Johnson lived and moved and thought on a lower plane than Carlyle, and that he cherished less lofty ideals of life and of duty. It is probably true also that his presence and his conversation made less impression on his contemporaries than did Carlyle's; but, through the wonderful Boswell, a livelier, more lovable, and more real image of him is likely to go down to succeeding ages than of the great Scotchman through his biographer.

In each of the illustrations given above it is obvious that the plan follows a logical method and that the purpose is to bring together those things which most naturally go together. Hence, in planning a composition, a good rule to remember is, that things closely related in time, place, or thought should be closely related in the discourse. Failure to observe this simple rule almost always results in throwing the reader's mind into more or less confusion, with the consequence that the proper effect of the discourse is partly, or even wholly, lost. Bad arrangement will often destroy the effect of even the best ideas; and in no case will good ideas produce their due effect without good arrangement.

20. Transitions.—Good coherence in the composition, as has been said, depends fundamentally upon the plan. The beginner must not suppose, however, that the mere making of a plan or outline,—however good that plan may be,—will of itself give to his composition that smoothness and evident connection which every well-written discourse should possess. Something besides mere planning is necessary. Each part or division of the composition must be properly linked with the adjoining parts or divisions, so that the reader will be able to pass from one topic to another by seemingly natural and easy means. In other words, the transitions must be made smooth and natural.

One way of doing this—and the best way—is to shape every paragraph or division of the discourse so that the end of it will seem to suggest that which is to follow. When this is impossible or undesirable, transition from one part to another may be made by means of some word or phrase of backward reference placed at or near the beginning of the second part.

Good illustrations of smooth and natural transitions may be seen, for example, in the following:

Sometimes, in addressing men who sincerely desire the betterment of our public affairs, but who have not taken active part in directing them, I feel tempted to tell them that there are two gospels which should be preached to every reformer. The first is the gospel of morality; the second is the gospel of efficiency.

To decent, upright citizens it is hardly necessary to preach

the doctrine of morality as applied to the affairs of public life. . . . The first requisite in the citizen who wishes to share the work of our public life . . . is that he shall act disinterestedly and with a sincere purpose to serve the whole commonwealth.

But disinterestedness and honesty and unselfish desire to do what is right are not enough in themselves. A man must not only be disinterested, but he must be efficient. . . . He must stand firmly for what he believes, and yet he must realize that political action, to be effective, must be the joint action of many men, and that he must sacrifice somewhat of his own opinions to those of his associates if he ever hopes to see his desires take practical shape.

The prime thing that every man who takes an interest in politics should remember is that he must act, and not merely criticise the actions of others. . . . We need fearless criticism of our public men and public parties; . . . but it behooves every man to remember . . . that, in the end, progress is accomplished by the man who does the things, and not by the man who talks about how they ought or ought not to be done.

Therefore the man who wishes to do good in his community must go into active political life. . . . He may find that he can do best by acting within a party organization; he may find that he can do best by acting . . . in an independent body of some kind; but with some association he must act if he wishes to exert any real influence.¹

21. **Proportion in the discourse.**—Not all the assertions that a writer makes for the purpose of bringing out the central idea of his discourse are of equal importance. Some have more value or weight than others. To make clear this difference in the im-

¹ Condensed from the beginning of Theodore Roosevelt's *The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics*. See *The Forum*, July, 1894.

portance of his various assertions is, of course, one of the duties of the writer. He must indicate what are to be regarded as the relatively important, and what the relatively unimportant ideas, or he runs the chance of having his meaning misapprehended. He must give every part of his composition that degree of prominence which its relation to the central idea demands. What bears upon the central idea most strongly should be made most prominent, — that is to say, given the most conspicuous position or the greatest amount of space, — and what bears upon it only remotely or indirectly should, if admitted at all, be kept strictly in the background. The whole composition should give the reader the impression that it is a finished, organic, and symmetrical structure, — a structure in which each part performs some definite function, and in which all the parts work together harmoniously towards producing a combined effect.

The necessity of having the composition well proportioned is, unfortunately, a thing too often lost sight of, even by good writers. As for beginners, they seldom give it so much as a thought. For them, chance ordinarily determines what shall or shall not be made prominent.

22. The beginning.—Except in books and treatises of considerable length, formal and extended introductions are quite out of place. Ordinarily, the writer should begin at once with the subject in hand. In very short compositions, he should always do so. The space at his disposal is usually all needed for the

development of his theme, and should therefore be used for that purpose and for no other. Notice the directness with which Lowell, for example, begins his essay on *Emerson the Lecturer*: "It is a singular fact that Mr. Emerson is the most steadily attractive lecturer in America." It is not always necessary, of course, to begin in this direct fashion; but, in general, it is a good way to begin. Begin at the real beginning, and waste as little time on introductory matter as possible, — that is the safest of all rules for the young writer to follow.

23. **The ending.** — With regard to the ending, a somewhat similar rule may be given. End when everything that it is really necessary to say has been said. Never prolong a composition beyond its natural and proper close; above all, never attach anything like a tag to the end of it. A good ending should leave the reader satisfied, neither surprised at its suddenness nor impatient that it is long drawn out.

As a rule, the ending should have something of the nature of a climax; that is, the interest in the composition should heighten steadily towards the end and be greatest at or near the conclusion. The precise form it should take will depend upon the nature of the subject and the circumstances under which it is treated. An effective ending in the form of a brief summary or recapitulation is seen, for example, in the following:¹

¹ Slightly abridged from an article by W. T. Stead in the *Book-lovers' Magazine* for May, 1903.

THE DESTINY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Never prophesy unless you know is a good rule. Yet all statesmanship is based upon foresight, which is equivalent to prophecy. We speculate, calculate, and draw inferences to the best of our ability, and then something unforeseen turns up and everything turns out otherwise.

South African destiny has been changed unexpectedly more than once. The discovery of diamonds made one revolution. The discovery of gold made another. If Cecil Rhodes had died of consumption, or if Paul Kruger had been eaten by a lion — both contingencies at one time very probable — the whole course of South African history would have been different. The chapter of accidents in that region is not exhausted. . . .

From an economic point of view South Africa seems destined to be the region from which mankind will draw its chief supplies of diamonds, gold, and copper. From a political standpoint it is destined to be as free as Canada, and as independent as Australia. Subject to the indispensable coaling station at Simon's Bay, without which the keystone would drop out of the arch of the imperial naval position of Great Britain, South Africa will be free from the control of the mother country. If the mother country recognizes this as inevitable, the mother country's flag may still for an indefinite period float over South Africa from Table Mountain to the Zambesi. If, on the contrary, the mother country fails to recognize the inevitable, and endeavors to maintain any authority over Africanderland, then the flag will come down. Africanderland will be governed by Afrianders. And as the majority of permanent resident white Afrianders are of Dutch descent, South Africa will, of necessity, be governed by the Dutch, as Quebec is by the French.

The Dutch are better men on the land than the English. Of that no fair-minded Englishman who has been in the

country entertains any doubt. Mr. Rhodes affirmed it as strongly as Benjamin Kidd. Not only are they better men, but they are much cleverer politicians. . . . The rough Dutch farmers from the back country have such a natural intuitive genius for politics that, after three weeks in Parliament, they can give points to any British member who has been in the House for months.

Not only are they better men all round on the land, not only are they abler politicians all round in the Houses of Parliament, but what is far more important, they are better breeders of men. The British colonist, following the example of the Frenchmen and the New Englander, shrinks from the primal task of multiplying and increasing and replenishing the earth. The Dutch cradle is never empty. If the hand that rocks the cradle sways the world, it is not less true that the race that fills the cradle will possess the world. Hence the destiny of South Africa seems tolerably certain to be that of a federation of self-governing states, preëminently Dutch, which will or will not be sheltered by the Union Jack, according to the readiness of the imperial government to recognize that it has no authority over Africanders.

EXERCISES

1. Limit each of the following general subjects in such a way as to make it suitable for a theme of about three hundred words:

Balloons.	American universities.
Chess.	Politics.
Chemistry.	Labor unionism.
Newspapers.	The theatre.
Municipal government.	Department stores.
Bees.	Arctic explorations.
The Olympic games.	Japan.

2. From what different points of view might each of the following subjects be treated? Indicate the plan you would adopt in writing on any one of them:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The last football game. | The influence of the theatre. |
| The tariff. | The Russo-Japanese war. |
| College fraternities. | Chinese immigration. |

3. Criticise and revise, if necessary, the following plan for an essay on, Why the Metric System should be generally adopted in the United States :

- a. The system is simple.
- b. It has been adopted by nearly all European nations.
- c. It is recommended by all statistical conferences and scientific societies.
- d. It is used in most scientific works even in England and in America.
- e. It would save time in mathematical calculations.

4. Outline the plan of the following:

- a. Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*.
- b. Chapter lxxviii in Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, "How Public Opinion Rules in America."

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. Our first class meeting.
2. My ideal college man.
3. Hints on how to decorate a room.
4. How to increase one's vocabulary.
5. The duty of courtesy to visiting athletic teams.
6. A visit to a coal mine.
7. The value of athletics as a part of college training.
8. The oddest man I ever knew.
9. An amusing adventure.
10. How we won the game.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 31

11. A case of presence of mind.
12. An exciting race.
13. My first experience in gardening.
14. An unpleasant experience.
15. Liquid air and its uses.
16. One view of Lincoln's character.
17. Lamb's humor (see the *Essays of Elia*).
18. Thoreau as a naturalist (see *Walden*).

CHAPTER III

THE PARAGRAPH

24. Definition.—A paragraph may be defined as a series of sentences devoted to the development of a single topic. Ordinarily, it is a subdivision of the whole composition, but sometimes it stands alone and of itself constitutes the discourse. In this case it is often called the isolated paragraph, though it should, in strictness, be regarded not as a paragraph, but as a whole composition.

Practically, the paragraph is the unit of discourse; for, although the sentence is the ultimate unit of expressed thought, the term "discourse" is not usually applied to anything short of an organized group of sentences, such as the paragraph is. Moreover, a discourse is built up paragraph by paragraph, rather than sentence by sentence.

25. Reasons for paragraphing.—The advantages of dividing a composition into paragraphs are obvious. Every one knows how uninviting solid pages of printed matter are, and how easily one can be persuaded to dip into a story where the pages are conveniently broken up into paragraphs. The reason is that the breaks made by indenting the first lines of the paragraphs serve as resting-places for the eye and help it greatly in conveying the thought to the mind. Were

paragraphing, therefore, a mere mechanical device for aiding the eye in reading and nothing more, it would amply justify itself. A deeper reason for paragraphing, however, is to be found in the writer's desire to proceed in an orderly fashion with his subject. If he is dealing with a subject of any complexity, — a subject wide enough to include under it several subordinate subjects or topics, — he naturally wishes to deal with these topics one at a time, and hence groups together all the statements or assertions he may make about any one topic. Should he not do so, there would be small chance of his making his composition effective.

Good paragraphing, therefore, is an essential part of good writing. It is an indication that the writer has thought clearly, and that he has endeavored to give his discourse a plan. There is no truer test of clear thinking on the part of the writer than good paragraphing in his composition. Paragraphs do not take shape of their own accord. They are not the result of spontaneous effort, as sentences often are. They are, on the contrary, the result of conscious prevision or planning. In writing a paragraph, one must have clearly in mind, not only his topic but everything he wishes to say in developing that topic. If he would hope to produce a given effect, he must foresee the end from the beginning, and he must not leave anything to chance.

This is, perhaps, where the novice oftenest comes to grief. He trusts to chance to determine where his paragraph shall begin and where it shall end.

He is perhaps aware of the fact that everything he says in his composition should have some relation to the subject he is writing upon, but he is seldom aware of the equally important fact that all the statements or assertions he makes with regard to this subject should be arranged in groups according to their relation to each other.

26. Classification.—The main function of the paragraph is, as we have seen, to serve as a means of developing the topics of the discourse. Occasionally, however, it performs other offices. It serves as a means of bringing the subject of the composition to the attention of the reader. Again, it is used as a device for passing from one to another of the larger divisions of the subject. It is used, also, in dialogue to distinguish the remarks of one character from those of another. Hence, taking the office which they perform in the discourse as the basis of classification, we may distinguish four more or less clearly defined kinds of paragraphs: (1) the normal, or developing paragraph; (2) the introductory paragraph; (3) the transitional paragraph; (4) the conventional paragraph,—the paragraph used in dialogue to differentiate the various speakers.

The normal or developing paragraph is the only one which has any very regular form or structure. The others are more or less loosely constructed, and may be regarded as abnormal types.

Illustrations of all four kinds may be seen in the following passages:

(1) If a well were to be sunk at our feet in the midst of the city of Norwich, the diggers would very soon find themselves at work in that white substance, almost too soft to be called rock, with which we are all familiar as "chalk."

Thus the chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust, and it impresses a peculiar stamp, varying with the conditions to which it is exposed, on the scenery of the districts in which it occurs. The undulating downs and rounded coombs, covered with sweet-grassed turf, of our inland chalk country, have a peacefully domestic and mutton-suggesting prettiness, but can hardly be called either grand or beautiful. But on our southern coasts the wall-sided cliffs, many hundred feet high, with vast needles and pinnacles standing out in the sea, sharp and solitary enough to serve as perches for the wary cormorant, confer a wonderful beauty and grandeur upon the chalk headlands. And in the East chalk has its share in the formation of some of the most venerable of mountain ranges, such as the Lebanon.

What is this widespread component of the surface of the earth? and whence did it come? ¹

(2) "Look there," said Reynal, pointing out of the opening of his lodge; "do you see that line of buttes about fifteen miles off? Well, now do you see that farthest one, with the white speck on the face of it? Do you think you ever saw it before?"

"It looks to me," said I, "like the hill that we were camped under when we were on Laramie Creek, six or eight weeks ago."

"You've hit it," answered Reynal.

"Go and bring in the animals, Raymond," said I; "we'll camp there to-night, and start for the fort in the morning."²

¹ T. H. Huxley, *On a Piece of Chalk*.

² Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*.

In the first passage the opening paragraph is purely introductory; it serves merely to indicate what is to be the subject of the lecture. The paragraph following is a normal or developing paragraph. Its topic is, chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust. The last paragraph in the passage is simply transitional; it makes no pretense at developing a topic. As is usual in the case of transitional paragraphs, it is short. The interrogative form is, of course, accidental.

In the bit of dialogue given in the second passage, we have a series of what we have called conventional paragraphs. The separate speeches of each character are set off in paragraphs by themselves, and the reader is thus enabled to differentiate the various characters presented. The conventional paragraph may, like the normal paragraph, develop a topic; but that is not essential. The only essential thing is that the paragraph be wholly devoted, except for the necessary comments of the writer, to the speech of a particular character on a particular occasion.

It should be observed that the conventional paragraph is used only in formal dialogue, — that is to say, in dialogue where the narrative is carried forward wholly by the characters themselves and not by the author in his own person. Where this is not the case, where the author carries on the story himself and simply uses the remarks of his characters to illustrate his own points, there is no necessity of put-

ting the speeches of the separate characters into paragraphs by themselves.

For example:

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gayety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine-boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheek through its professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whiskey, which he had prudently *cached*. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whiskey," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm and the group around it that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."¹

In the following passage from a student's theme, however, the paragraphing is faulty, since the dialogue does not get its proper emphasis:

"All ready!" shouted the starter. Bang went the pistol, and off went the runners like flash. It was the last event of the closely contested meet, and the interest in it was intense.

¹ From Bret Harte's *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*.

"Who will win?" asked Mildred eagerly. "Williams, of course," replied Jack. "The fellows all say he has no end of grit. Look at him! Look at him!" And he waved his banner and shouted frantically, as his favorite began slowly to forge ahead of the other runners.

Properly paragraphed, this should read as follows:

"All ready!" shouted the starter. Bang went the pistol, and off went the runners like a flash. It was the last event of the closely contested meet, and interest in it was intense.

"Who will win?" asked Mildred eagerly.

"Williams, of course," replied Jack. "The fellows all say he has no end of grit. Look at him! Look at him!" And he waved his banner and shouted frantically, as his favorite began slowly to forge ahead of the other runners.

27. Structure of the paragraph.—The normal or developing paragraph, as we have seen, is the only kind of paragraph which ordinarily has any very regular form or structure. It is the paragraph of this kind we have in mind, then, when we speak of the laws of paragraph structure.

As to these laws, we find them to be virtually the same as those which govern the structure of the whole composition. The normal paragraph is, in fact, a miniature composition in itself; and unity and the coherence of its parts are just as necessary to make it effective as they are in the case of the larger whole.

28. Unity in the paragraph.—The demands of unity require that there should be but one topic in the paragraph. If we try to talk about two or three

things at once, we cannot expect that what we have to say about any one of them will be given its proper amount of attention. Everything that is in the paragraph, therefore, should relate to a single topic, — that is to say, to some particular aspect or division of the subject under discussion. The paragraph exists, in fact, solely for the purpose of dealing properly with these minor divisions of the subject; and that it may be effective, it should deal with only one of them at a time. Irrelevant matter, by distracting the attention of the reader, impairs the effectiveness of the paragraph.

Observe the effectiveness of the following admirably unified paragraph from Macaulay:

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to the truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed: some transactions are prominent; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will

be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

In this paragraph we have, first, a statement of the topic, and following that, a series of sentences, each of which in some degree helps towards bringing out the content of the statement made in the first sentence. No irrelevant matter is brought in, and no digressions are made. The writer keeps his eye on his topic, and devotes himself for the time being solely to the development of that particular topic and no other. Hence the effectiveness of the paragraph.

A good test of the unity of a paragraph is the exactness with which the gist of it may be summed up in a single sentence. Sometimes, indeed, it may be thus summed up by taking the opening and the closing words of the paragraph itself, as in the following paragraph, which Professor Arlo Bates has ingeniously constructed to illustrate the point:

In the work of shaping paragraphs the student should bear in mind all the principles which have been set forth in relation to the end and the beginning. These apply no less to the parts than to the whole composition. The paragraph should generally end with the idea upon which most immediately depends the thought of the whole. It should begin with that portion of the thought which best introduces the central topic of the paragraph, which very commonly will be the idea next in importance to that chosen for the end. The beginning and end of the paragraph will remain the most

effective portions whether the writer wishes or not. Something in the middle may be so striking that it will most strongly hold the attention, but this is exceptional, and even then this striking sentence will lose in force by its position. All this is connected naturally with the fact that in a well-wrought paragraph a sentence may generally be made of the beginning and the end which with tolerable exactness will sum up the thought of the whole.¹

The gist of this may be very well summed up as follows: "In the work of shaping paragraphs the student should bear in mind . . . the fact that in a well-wrought paragraph a sentence may generally be made of the beginning and the end which with tolerable exactness will sum up the thought of the whole."

29. Coherence in the paragraph. — Good coherence in the paragraph is almost, if not quite, as important as unity; for the lack of it, like the lack of unity, distracts the reader's attention and hinders him from getting a quick grasp of the relation of the various details to one another and to the central topic of the paragraph. The various statements or assertions which go to make up the paragraph must, therefore, be grouped according to some plan; and the plan should be a natural and obvious one.

As an illustration of what a little attention given to the planning of the paragraph will do for its effectiveness, take this paragraph from a student's composition, first as it appeared in its original form, and then as rewritten under criticism:

¹ *Talks on Writing English*, (second series), p. 118.

He was a man of no education to speak of. At the time our story opens, he was about sixty-five years of age, healthy and strong, indeed, for a man of his age, but the lines of his face were sharp and his shoulders had a stoop to them. The hard work and rigid self-denial which had enabled him to build up his fortune had left their mark upon him. In appearance and dress he was anything but pleasing. He usually wore the shabbiest of old clothes. Yet he was possessed of a not inconsiderable fund of worldly wisdom. Of late, he had been very lucky in certain business ventures, and was reputed to be very rich, though no one came near guessing how rich. He talked well, and in the heat of debate his gray eyes would light up in a way that went far to redeem his otherwise unprepossessing appearance.

Little or no effort has been made here, as is evident, to get the various details mentioned arranged on any preconceived plan. Details that are most closely related in thought are often widest apart. For instance, the remark about the man's lack of education, instead of being associated with the remark about his possession of a "not inconsiderable amount of worldly wisdom," is followed by a statement about his age and personal appearance. Incoherences of this kind abound.

In the paragraph as rewritten, these incoherences disappear, with a consequent gain in effectiveness:

At the time our story opens, he was a man about sixty-five years old, vigorous, too, for a man of his age. In the sharp lines of his face and the stoop of his shoulders, however, one could see that the hard work and rigorous self-denial which had enabled him to build up his fortune had left their mark

upon him. He was reputed to be very rich, though no one came near guessing how rich. Notwithstanding his wealth and position, however, he always dressed shabbily, not to say meanly. In his general appearance, indeed, he was anything but pleasing. Yet in the heat of debate, his gray eyes would light up in a way that went far towards redeeming his otherwise unprepossessing appearance. He had small store of what he called "book larnin'"; but his speeches betrayed the fact that he possessed a not inconsiderable fund of worldly wisdom.

30. The typical paragraph scheme.—All paragraphs are not, of course, planned in the same way. Nevertheless, there is a typical scheme to which the great majority more or less closely conform. This typical scheme may be outlined thus: (1) the statement of the topic; (2) the development of the topic; (3) the conclusion.

Observe how closely the following paragraphs, for example, conform to this scheme:

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor, even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do

such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.¹

To go light is to play the game fairly. The man in the woods matches himself against the forces of nature. In the towns he is warmed and fed and clothed so spontaneously and easily that after a time he perforce begins to doubt himself, to wonder whether his powers are not atrophied from disuse. And so, with his naked soul, he fronts the wilderness. It is a test, a measuring of strength, a proving of his essential pluck and resourcefulness and manhood, an assurance of man's highest potency, the ability to endure and to take care of himself. In just so far as he substitutes the ready-made of civilization for the wit-made of the forest, the pneumatic bed for the balsam boughs, in just so far is he relying on other men and other men's labor to take care of him. To exactly that extent is the test invalidated. He has not proved a courteous antagonist, for he has not stripped to the contest.²

The average paragraph has not, perhaps, quite so regular a construction as those just cited, both of which have an explicit statement of the topic in the first sentence and a clearly defined conclusion. Still, it tends in the direction of the typical form outlined above, and departs from that form only because of the necessity of avoiding monotony. Owing to the need of variety, we often find the set conclusion omitted and the topic stated in some other sentence than the opening one, or even left without explicit statement at

¹ From Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*.

² From Stewart Edward White's, *The Forest*.

all. In this last case the paragraph must be so constructed that the reader will have no difficulty in formulating the topic for himself. In the following paragraph, for example, there is no statement of the topic, but the reader at once perceives that the paragraph is a unified and coherent whole:

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good-humor characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, "Five Spot," for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of "Five Spot" with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema."¹

31. Methods of developing the topic.—The precise method to be followed in developing any given topic will depend, obviously, upon the nature of the topic and the purpose of the paragraph. In general, however, it will consist of one or another or some combination of the following things:

¹ From Bret Harte's, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*.

- (1) Grouping together closely related details.
- (2) Defining or fixing the limits of the topic.
- (3) Amplifying or enlarging upon the content or meaning of the topic.
- (4) Citing instances or examples by way of illustration of the topic.

The first method, — the grouping of closely related details, — is that ordinarily employed in pure narration and description. In this case, the topic of the paragraph is seldom or never explicitly set forth. An example of this method may be seen in the following:

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded around him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip started in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?" Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village? — "Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king, God bless him!"¹

¹ From Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*.

METHODS OF DEVELOPING THE TOPIC 47

Development by definition may be illustrated by the following:

The kinetic theory of gases is now generally accepted by men of science, and all modern investigations of the mathematical relations of molecular forces and centres are based upon this theory. It asserts that a gas consists of a collection of molecules, simple or compound, which are in extremely rapid motion and which intermingle freely, coming into collision with each other, probably, and certainly with the confining surfaces of the chamber in which they may be contained, with a violence which depends upon their velocities; which velocities, in turn, are determined by the temperature of the mass. In fact, the supposed motion of these particles is that mode of motion known as heat. The intermolecular spaces, and hence the free paths of the molecules, are comparatively large, and each molecule moves over distances of considerable length, as compared to its own diameter, on the average, without collision with its neighbor molecules; but the continual motion of all produces great variations in the momentary distances of particle from particle, and while the mean density of the mass at any point is preserved, the number of molecules within any prescribed space is never the same at any two consecutive instants.¹

Development by amplifying or enlarging upon the meaning of the topic is, perhaps, the most common of all methods of topic development, and hence may be regarded as the typical method. The following example will suffice as an illustration:

Yet one more cause of failure in our lives here may be briefly spoken of — the want of method or order. Men do

¹ From R. H. Thurston's *Heat as a Form of Energy*.

not consider sufficiently, not merely what is suited to the generality, but what is suited to themselves individually. They have different gifts and therefore their studies should take a different course. One man is capable of continuous thought and reading, while another has not the full use of his faculties for more than an hour or two at a time. It is clear that persons so differently constituted should proceed on a different plan. Again, one man is gifted with powers of memory and acquisition, another with thought and reflection; it is equally clear that there ought to be a corresponding difference in the branches of study to which they devote themselves. Things are done in half the time and with half the toil when they are done upon a well-considered system, when there is no waste and nothing has to be unlearned. As mechanical forces pressed into the service of man increase a hundredfold more and more his bodily strength, so does the use of method, — of all methods which science has already invented (for as actions are constantly passing into habits, so is science always being converted into method), — of all the methods which an individual can devise for himself, enlarge and extend the mind. And yet how rarely does any one ever make a plan of study for himself — or a plan of his own life.¹

An illustration of development by citing instances or examples is afforded by the following:

Historians and philosophers have not infrequently remarked that the stress of war results in the advancement of science and learning. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt carried in its train the unlocking of the mysteries of the hieroglyphs and the production of the great work "Description de l'Egypte." More recently the foundation of the University of Strassburg signalized the close of the Franco-Prussian War

¹ From Benjamin Jowett's *College Sermons*.

while the establishment of the Johns Hopkins University was a direct resultant of the war between the States, and was intended, at least in the mind of the founder, to assist in healing the breaches this had created.¹

32. Maintaining the point of view.—A frequent cause of the trouble which beginners experience in developing their paragraphs is their failure to keep to the same point of view throughout the paragraph. The topic of the paragraph must not only be kept prominently before the reader's mind, but it must also be held, as it were, in the same light, considered under the same conditions. This means that all the minor details of the paragraph should be kept strictly subordinate to the main detail or topic, and that no one of them should ever be allowed to become too prominent.

An illustration will make the point clear:

The *Autobiography* of Benjamin Franklin is a very famous work. It was not only one of the most widely read books of its time but is at present read with much pleasure and profit. It was written when the author was very old and had risen to a considerable height of popularity both at home and abroad. He was really the first great literary and political product of young America. Moreover, owing to many reasons, such as the newness of the country, etc., there was then a great dearth of literature. For these two reasons, therefore, the *Autobiography* of Franklin met the eye of the colonists with much favor. The short sentences, and the direct and easy style pleased them. His early life, too, was such

¹ *Scribner's Magazine*, Jan., 1904, p. 86.

as many youths of that day led. The *Autobiography*, therefore, appealed to them especially, and it has continued as a great literary production to the present time.¹

The topic of this paragraph is the continued popularity of Franklin's *Autobiography*. The first three sentences take up and proceed with the discussion of this topic; but in the fourth, the point of view suddenly changes, and we are asked to consider the fact of Franklin's priority among the great literary and political geniuses produced by America. In the eighth sentence, a similar fault is noticeable. The facts that Franklin was "the first great literary and political product of young America," and that "his early life . . . was such as many youths of that day led" may have been reasons why Franklin's contemporaries read his *Autobiography*; but in that case the writer should have stated them as reasons and not as mere facts. In other words, as reasons for the early popularity of the *Autobiography*, they might have been made prominent; but as mere facts, they have no claim to prominence in the paragraph whatever.

33. Parallel construction in the paragraph.— Keeping to the same point of view in the paragraph means, as a rule, the fashioning of the sentences on pretty much the same lines, at least the avoidance of any marked and unnecessary changes in the sentence structure. If this tendency is carried to the extreme,

¹ From a student's theme.

— that is, if corresponding sentences, clauses, and phrases are cast in practically the same mold, — the result is what is commonly known as parallel construction. In the following paragraph from Macaulay, for example, the clause “it was clear,” in the fourth sentence, has its corresponding clause “it was equally clear,” in the fifth; and upon the latter depend a series of “that” clauses, two of which are exactly similar in structure:

The inquiry was so extensive that the Houses rose before it had been completed. It was continued in the following session. When at length the committee had concluded its labors, enlightened and impartial men had little difficulty in making up their minds as to the result. It was clear that Clive had been guilty of some acts which it is impossible to vindicate without attacking the authority of all the most sacred laws which regulate the intercourse of individuals and of states. But it was equally clear that he had displayed great talents and even great virtues; that he had rendered eminent services both to his country and to the people of India; and that it was in truth not for his dealings with Meer Jaffier, nor for the fraud which he had practised on Omi-chund, but for his determined resistance to avarice and tyranny that he was now called in question.

The parallelism of this paragraph is brought about mainly by balancing one sentence or clause over against another. Balancing of sentences and clauses, however, is by no means invariable in parallel construction, as is evident from the following paragraph from Newman, where there is comparatively little attempt at setting one sentence or clause over against

another, but where there is an almost perfect parallelism in sentence structure from beginning to end:

Pride, under such training, instead of running to waste in the education of the mind, is turned to account; it is called self-respect; and ceases to be the disagreeable, uncompanionable quality which it is in itself. Though it be the motive principle of the soul, it seldom comes to view; and when it shows itself, then delicacy and gentleness are its attire, and good sense and sense of honor direct its motions. It is no longer a restless agent, without definite aim; it has a large field of exertion assigned to it, and it subserves those social interests which it would naturally trouble. It is directed into the channel of industry, frugality, honesty, and obedience; and it becomes the very staple of the religion and morality held in honor in a day like our own. It becomes the safeguard of chastity, the guarantee of veracity, in high and low; it is the very household god of society, as at present constituted, inspiring neatness and decency in the servant girl, propriety of carriage and refined manners in her mistress, uprightness, manliness, and generosity in the head of the family. It diffuses a light over town and country; it covers the soil with handsome edifices and smiling gardens; it tills the field, it stocks and embellishes the shop. It is the stimulating principle of providence on the one hand, and of free expenditure on the other; of an honorable ambition, and of elegant enjoyment. It breathes upon the face of the community, and the hollow sepulchre is forthwith beautiful to look upon.

Parallel construction is one of the most effective devices for securing paragraph coherence known. It should be used rather sparingly, however, since a too frequent use of it gives an air of artificiality to

the style, and tends also to produce monotony. Variety in paragraph structure is as important as variety in anything else. Hence the writer will do well if he continually varies the plan of his paragraphs.

34. Proportion in the paragraph.—To produce its best effect, a paragraph must have its form adapted to that division of the subject of the discourse which it discusses. This means, in the first place, that its length must correspond to the importance of the topic it develops; and, in the second place, that its prominent positions must be given to those details which properly deserve the emphasis. No paragraph will reach its proper degree of effectiveness if these two points are neglected.

As to length, it is a good rule to avoid very long paragraphs. Whenever a paragraph extends over several pages, it will usually be found either lacking somewhat in unity, or developed beyond the limits marked by the importance of its topic with regard to the subject of the composition. In any case, if it is too long to be at once mentally reviewed and grasped as a whole, it is too long to be effective. The modern theory of paragraphing really hinges upon the fact that a paragraph should be an organic part of the discourse small enough for the mind to take it in as a whole at one moment of time. On the other hand, frequent very short paragraphs should likewise be avoided, since they tend to give a "scrappy" effect to a discourse. Here, as in all things, the golden mean is the rule to follow.

35. Emphasis in the paragraph.— With regard to emphasis, the important thing for the writer to remember is that the naturally emphatic positions in the paragraph are the beginning and the end. In these positions, therefore, should be placed those details to which attention is to be especially called.

What particular detail should be placed at the beginning and what at the end, will depend upon the circumstances of the case. Other things being equal, however, the end will give more emphasis to a point than the beginning. Hence the clue to emphasis in the paragraph lies mainly in the management of the conclusion. Effective devices for making the conclusion emphatic are the employment of a short, summarizing sentence at the end; restatement of the topic, either in the same or in other words; and inversion, or arranging the sentences of the paragraph in such a way as to bring the topic sentence last. Examples of these devices are given below:

(1) Ending a short summarizing sentence:

So talks the sender with noise and deliberation. It is the Morse code working — ordinary dots and dashes which can be made into letters and words, as everybody knows. With each movement of the key bluish sparks jump an inch between the two brass knobs of the induction coil, the same kind of coil and the same kind of sparks that are familiar in experiments with the Roentgen rays. For one dot, a single spark jumps; for one dash there comes a stream of sparks. One knob of the induction coil is connected with the earth, the

other with the wire hanging from the masthead. Each spark indicates a certain oscillating impulse from the electrical battery that actuates the coil; each one of these impulses shoots through the ærial space by oscillations of the ether, traveling at the speed of light, or seven times around the earth in a second. That is all there is in the sending of these Marconi messages.¹

(2) Ending a restatement of the topic:

Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking further and further, and finding "in the lowest depth a lower deep," till you come to the broad bosom of scepticism. I would rather be bound to defend the reasonableness of assuming that Christianity is true, than to demonstrate a moral governance from the physical world. Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.²

(3) Ending a placing of the topic sentence last:

The tact of the Greeks in matters of this kind³ was infallible. We may rely upon it that we shall not improve upon the classification adopted by the Greeks for kinds of poetry;

¹ From an article by Cleveland Moffett in *McClure's Magazine*.

² From Newman's *Discussions and Arguments*.

³ Matthew Arnold, from whose essay on *Wordsworth* this example is taken, had remarked in the preceding paragraph that Wordsworth's classification of his poems is ingenious but far-fetched.

that their categories of epic, dramatic, lyric, and so forth, have a natural propriety, and should be adhered to. It may sometimes seem doubtful to which of two categories a poem belongs; whether this or that poem is to be called, for instance, narrative or lyric, lyric or elegiac. But there is to be found in every good poem a strain, a predominant note, which determines the poem as belonging to one of these kinds rather than the other; and here is the best proof of the value of the classification, and of the advantage of adhering to it. Wordsworth's poems will never produce their due effect until they are freed from their present artificial arrangement, and grouped more naturally.

EXERCISES

1. Criticise the paragraph structure of some article you have read in the current magazines on the score of (a) unity, (b) coherence, (c) proportion.
2. A study of the paragraphing in one of Macaulay's essays.
3. Develop the following paragraph topics in such a way as to produce a coherent theme on the subject, College spirit:
 - a. What college spirit is.
 - b. Ways in which it may properly manifest itself.
 - c. Its value, both to the student and to the college.
4. Read Lectures II and III in Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* and write a review of them, using the following as paragraph topics:
 - a. Carlyle's conception of a hero.
 - b. His distinction between the hero as prophet and the hero as poet.
 - c. His typical hero-prophet.
 - d. His examples of the hero as poet.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. Some of the discomforts of city life.
2. Some of my favorite books and why I like them.
3. Reporting for a newspaper.
4. On faultfinding.
5. True and false patriotism.
6. The value of class contests.
7. Manners show the man.
8. A scene at a lunch-counter.
9. My highest ambition.
10. A ghost story.
11. A good joke.
12. A narrow escape.
13. The habit of observing things.
14. Questionable amusements.
15. On neglecting little things.
16. Every man should try to do one thing well.
17. Can a man ever tell the whole truth?
18. A comment upon Ruskin's "Of King's Treasuries"
(see *Sesame and Lilies*).
19. The characterization in Stevenson's *Kidnapped*.

CHAPTER IV

THE SENTENCE

36. Definition. — A sentence may be defined as a group of words expressing a complete thought or idea. It is the smallest unit by means of which thought may be given complete expression. It is thus the ultimate unit of discourse; for nothing less than a sentence, or group of words expressing a complete thought, can stand alone.

37. Classification of sentences according to grammatical structure. — In its simplest form, a sentence consists of a simple subject and a simple predicate, in which case the expression of thought is limited to the mere statement of a fact without qualifications or modifications of any kind. For example: "They have gone." In the actual communication of thought in compositions, however, sentences of this kind are the exception rather than the rule. Ordinarily, ideas are much too complex to be expressed in this way. We usually find it necessary or desirable to modify our assertions, to state not merely the bald fact, but the circumstances or conditions attendant upon the fact. Thus instead of saying, "They have gone," we might wish to state the fact as modified or enlarged upon in one of the following ways:

- (1) They have gone without saying good-by.
- (2) Since they have forgotten their gloves, they have evidently gone off in a hurry.
- (3) They have gone, and we shall not see them again until to-morrow.

Examination reveals the fact that we have here three kinds of sentences, each essentially different from the others in its grammatical structure. In the first sentence, there is but one assertion; in the second, there are two, but one of them is made subordinate to the other; in the third, there are also two assertions, but in this case the two assertions are of coördinate rank. Hence the grammatical classification of sentences into (1) simple, (2) complex, and (3) compound sentences. These may be defined more fully as follows:

(1) A simple sentence is one in which there is but one statement or assertion. This assertion need not, of course, be limited to a bare statement of fact. There may be qualifications added, but these qualifications must be in the form of words or phrases only.

Examples:

The sun shines.

For some days the king's death was kept a secret.

(2) A complex sentence is one in which there is a main assertion modified by one or more minor or subordinate assertions.

Examples:

It is unfortunate that this somewhat delicate situation should have arisen.

In his writings, indeed, the knowledge of life which he possessed in an eminent degree is very imperfectly exhibited.

On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances, — it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind.

(3) A compound sentence is one in which there are two or more main or coördinate assertions. Each of these assertions may be modified by one or more subordinate assertions.

Examples:

All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives.

It was a dangerous step for him to take; but it was a step which, if he wished to hold what he had already won, he must take.

Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less.

For some years a boy's intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what

is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbors all around him.

38. Unity in the sentence. — The first requisite of a good sentence is that it should be a unit. It must be the presentation of one complete thought and only one.

In the simple sentence, there can, of course, be no violation of unity, since by its very nature it consists of but one assertion. In the complex sentence, too, from the fact that there is only one main assertion, there is always at least an appearance of unity. Logical unity may easily be destroyed here, however, by joining with the main assertion subordinate assertions which have no close or immediate relation to it. For example: "She played me something or other on the piano, which was a fine-looking instrument of the upright kind." Here the remark about the appearance of the piano has little or no relevancy to the main assertion, and should not, therefore, be made to appear as a modification of it. The subordinate clause cannot be used as a means of tacking on to the main clause anything or everything the writer happens to have in his mind at the moment; it must modify the main clause in fact as well as in form.

In compound sentences, unity may be much more easily violated than in complex sentences. Here, from the fact there must always be at least two coördinate assertions, there may often be a question

in the writer's mind as to whether these assertions are closely enough related to be joined together in one sentence. The beginner, to be sure, usually proceeds upon the assumption that he has but to join one clause with another by means of an "and" or a "but," or some such coördinating conjunction, and that that is all there is to it. Needless to say, that is not all there is to it. Conjunctions have no magical power; they may reveal, but they cannot create relations between clauses.

The coördinate parts of a compound sentence must have a close natural or logical relation to each other, which will serve to bind them together and so give them, as a combination, unity. If they lack this close relation, they cannot make a good sentence. In the following sentence, for example, the lack of this close relation is apparent at a glance:

Some parts of the lake are very deep, as is the case with most of the Wisconsin lakes, and deep down in these holes amongst the reeds the muskallonge makes his home, and I know no better sport than to get out early in the morning with a deep troll baited with salt pork and wait for the big fellows to strike.

The assertion that it is good sport to troll for muskallonge in the early morning obviously has nothing to do with the assertion that some parts of a certain lake in Wisconsin are very deep. The two assertions can not, therefore, properly be put into the same sentence.

Theoretically, the number of related assertions that may be grouped together in a single sentence is indeterminate. It all depends on how many the reader's mind can hold in suspension at once. In actual practice, however, whether a given series of coördinate assertions should be grouped together in one sentence or kept apart in separate sentences will usually depend on the effect that the writer intends to produce.

To illustrate the point, take the following passages from Macaulay:

(a) Pitt, who did not love Legge, saw this event with indifference. But the danger was now fast approaching himself. Charles the Third of Spain had early conceived a deadly hatred of England. Twenty years before, when he was King of the Two Sicilies, he had been eager to join the coalition against Maria Theresa. But an English fleet had suddenly appeared in the Bay of Naples. An English Captain had landed, had proceeded to the palace, had laid a watch on the table, and had told his majesty that, within an hour, a treaty of neutrality must be signed, or a bombardment would commence. *The treaty was signed; the squadron sailed out of the bay twenty-four hours after it had sailed in; and from that day the ruling passion of the humbled Prince was aversion to the English name.* He was at length in a situation to gratify that passion. He had recently become King of Spain and the Indies.

(b) Five years after the death of Prince Frederic, the public mind was for a time violently excited. But this excitement had nothing to do with the old disputes between Whigs and Tories. England was at war with France. *The war had been feebly conducted. Minorca had been torn from us. Our fleet had retired before the white flag of the House of*

Bourbon. A bitter sense of humiliation, new to the proudest and bravest of nations, superseded every other feeling. The cry of all the counties and great towns of the realms was for a government which would retrieve the honor of the English arms.

In the first passage, the coördinate clauses of the sentence italicized might very well, so far as they themselves are concerned, have been made separate sentences. The various assertions have not, as is the case with those of the preceding sentence, that intimate relation with each other which makes it impossible to disjoin them: they are not separate assertions with regard to one act, but assertions dealing with separate and distinct acts. Consequently, each might have been made an independent sentence. From the point of view of their relation to the topic of the paragraph, however, they ought obviously to be taken together; hence the writer has made a single sentence of them. Notice, now, the way in which he has treated a similar series of assertions in the second passage, — the series italicized. The assertions in this series might properly enough have been grouped in one sentence. The first sentence states a general truth, the two following give illustrative particulars, and the fourth presents the consequence. All are closely related. But the writer's purpose in the paragraph is to bring out as strongly as he can the fact that the public mind of England was for a time violently excited in consequence of the conduct of the war; and to do this, he

emphasizes as much as possible the causes of the excitement by mentioning each in a separate sentence. The result is analogous to the cumulative effect of a series of blows delivered in rapid succession.

39. Length of the sentence. — Just what the length of the average sentence should be, it is hard to say. It depends a little on the writer's individuality, though more, perhaps, on the nature of the subject. A rough calculation based on passages of about one thousand words each selected at random from Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*, Newman's *Idea of a University*, and Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* shows an average sentence length of about twenty-six, thirty, and thirty-nine words, respectively. The subjects treated here are similar in their nature, and the difference in sentence length is due mainly to the difference in the individuality of the writers, Macaulay being evidently much fonder of the short sentence than Matthew Arnold. Again, making a similar calculation from passages of the same length from two of Stevenson's works, — *Virginibus Puerisque*, on the one hand, and *Treasure Island*, on the other, — the results show an average sentence length of thirty-four and thirty words respectively. Here the difference is due solely to the nature of the subject.

As we should suppose, the long sentence is much more often used in discourses of a serious nature than in those of lighter character. The natural tendency of the long sentence is to give weight and strength to the style of a discourse; that of the short

sentence — provided it does not go to an extreme — is to give lightness, ease, and flexibility. Notice, for example, the difference in style between the two following passages, — the one from Darwin's *Origin of Species*, with its average of fifty-nine words to the sentence, the other from Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, with its average of only twenty-two words to the sentence:

On the ordinary view of each species having been independently created, why should specific characters, or those by which the species of the same genus differ from each other, be more variable than generic characters in which they all agree? Why, for instance, should the color of a flower be more likely to vary in any one species of a genus, if the other species possess differently colored flowers, than if all possessed the same colored flowers? If species are only well-marked varieties, of which the characters have become in a high degree permanent, we can understand this fact; for they have already varied since they branched off from a common progenitor in certain characters, by which they have come to be specifically different from each other; therefore these same characters would be more likely again to vary than the generic characters which have been inherited without change for an immense period. It is inexplicable on the theory of creation why a part developed in a very unusual manner in one species alone of a genus, and therefore, as we may naturally infer, of great importance to that species, should be eminently liable to variation; but, on our view, this part has undergone, since the several species branched off from a common progenitor, an unusual amount of variability and modification, and therefore we might expect the part generally to be still variable. But a part may be developed in the most unusual manner, like the wing of a bat, and yet not be more variable than any other

structure, if the part be common to many subordinate forms, that is, if it has been inherited for a very long period; for in this case it will have been rendered constant by long-continued natural selection.¹

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing. The western end was already steeped in moonshine; the rest, and the block-house itself, still lay in a black shadow, checkered with long, silvery streaks of light. On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned itself into clear embers, and shed a steady, red reverberation, contrasted strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon. There was not a soul stirring, nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze.

I stopped, with much wonder in my heart, and perhaps a little terror also. It had not been our way to build great fires; we were, indeed, by the captain's orders, somewhat niggardly of firewood; and I began to fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent.

I stole round by the eastern end, keeping close in shadow, and at a convenient place, where the darkness was thickest, crossed the palisade.

To make assurance surer, I got upon my hands and knees, and crawled, without a sound, toward the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, my heart was suddenly and greatly lightened. It was not a pleasant noise in itself, and I have often complained of it at other times; but just then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and peaceful in their sleep. The sea-cry of the watch, that beautiful "All's well," never fell more reassuringly on my ear.²

As a rule, the beginner will do well to avoid trying to put very much into one sentence. Long sentences are apt to be lacking somewhat in unity. In any

¹ From Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

² From Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

case, they are much more difficult to handle than sentences of a medium length. Where there may be legitimate doubt as to whether a number of assertions should be grouped together in one sentence or kept separate, the safer plan for the beginner to follow will be to keep them separate. Above all things, aimless wandering on through an endless series of clauses should be avoided. Scarcely anything is so irritating to a reader as a sentence that goes everywhere, takes in everything, and gets nowhere.

40. Coherence in the sentence. — Ordinarily, the problem of securing coherence in the sentence is not one that troubles the writer very much. Sentences, especially if they are short and comparatively simple in structure, tend to shape themselves. If the writer observes the rules of grammar, that fact settles, for perhaps the majority of his sentences, what part shall be joined to what other part and where each part shall be placed. Nevertheless, the beginner must not suppose, as too often he does, that he can dispense with all forethought in the matter.

Incoherence in the structure of the sentence may be due to errors in grammar, to loose construction, or to faulty punctuation.

41. Grammatical errors. — The correction of grammatical errors does not, in strictness, fall within the scope of this work; still, faults of a certain kind are so common that they deserve notice. Among these, one of the most common is the use of a wrong number or a wrong case when the verb and its subject or

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object, or the preposition and its object, are placed widely apart. For example:

Novel *ideas* in the way of advertising *commands* a good price.

An interesting *series* of services *were* arranged for the occasion.

He alone loves me; *he* alone can I *trust*.

Who should he *have* with him but this very same man.

Who is he talking *with*?

They saw the man *whom* they supposed *was* dead.

Each of the drive-wheels *were* six feet in diameter.

Of a similar nature is the fault shown in the following sentences:

Neither of the brothers *were* there.

The ship with its whole crew *were* lost.

Greek as well as Latin *were* required studies then.

No word or act of his *require* any such explanation.

Words or phrases beginning with *or*, *nor*, *as well as*, *with*, *together with*, and the like, cannot be regarded as forming part of the subject of the verb.

A frequent cause of faulty grammar is carelessness or confusion in the use of relatives and reference words in general. For example:

One of the earliest birds of spring in central Illinois is the *blackbird*; *they* arrive usually about the middle of March.

"*Everybody* for *themselves*," seems to be the rule here.

One cannot always have what *they want* simply by asking for it.

It is good enough for *these kind of* people.

I am one of those people who cannot express all that *I feel*.

He is one of the best speakers *that has* ever appeared on this platform.

In the last example, two distinct ideas are confounded. "He is the best speaker that has ever appeared on this platform," expresses one idea; "Of all the speakers who have ever appeared on this platform, he is one of the best," expresses quite another idea.

Another frequent cause of faulty grammar is carelessness in the use of participles. Except in the case of the absolute construction — a comparatively rare construction in English — the participle must be attached to some noun or pronoun in the sentence, and this noun or pronoun should represent the subject of the action indicated by the participle. In the following sentences this condition is not observed, and hence the participles are left suspended, as it were, in the air:

While *making* excavations there not long ago, between fifteen and twenty marble *images* were uncovered.

Accustomed to regular living, our Bohemian *mode* of living disturbed him greatly.

Being a freshman, *it* was expected that I should join the other members of the class in retaliating on the sophomores.

After *reading* the book through, one's first *impression* is confirmed.

The mistake of confusing *shall* and *will* is one that has often been pointed out, but the error does not seem to grow any the less common. Briefly stated, the rules with regard to the use of these words are as follows: In declarative sentences, to express simple futurity, *shall* is used in the first person and *will* in

the second and third persons. In questions, however, *shall you* is used instead of *will you* to indicate futurity. In all other cases, *shall* and *will* express purpose or determination on the part of the speaker, — that is to say, *will* in the first person and *shall* in the second and third persons. *Should* and *would* follow, in general, the same rule. In clauses expressing a condition, however, *should* is used in all three persons. *Should*, also, is used in all three persons to express the sense of duty. *Would*, moreover, is occasionally used in a frequentative sense, — that is, to indicate a habit. The following are examples of correct usage:

I shall go.	He will go.	} Simple futurity.
You will go.	Shall you go?	

I will go with you and together we shall put it through.
(*Will* here expresses intention and *shall* futurity.)

I will make my mark in life, and it shall be a clear and distinct one, too. (Both *shall* and *will* here express intention on the part of the speaker.)

If he should try it, he would be successful. (*Should* here expresses condition.)

He should be more careful. (*Should* here expresses duty.)

He would take long walks in the country when the weather was fine. (*Would* here indicates frequency of action.)

Lack of consistency in the use of tenses is a source of trouble almost as common, especially in the compositions of beginners, as the confounding of *shall* and *will*. Take, for example, the following:

I intended *to have spoken* to him yesterday.

If he had remained here, it would have been difficult for him *to have maintained* his position.

He would probably have gone if he *were* ready.

I should have liked *to have seen* him.

Though not easily moved, he is often violent when he does become angry; but he soon repents, and then he *would do* anything to atone for any offense he *gave*.

One or two simple principles, if carefully kept in mind, will save the beginner from most mistakes of the kind seen in the examples given above. In the first place, with regard to infinitives, the present form indicates action coincident with the time expressed by the principal verb, or subsequent to it, whether that verb be present or past; the perfect form indicates action anterior to that of the principal verb. In the second place, with regard to dependent clauses, if the tense of the principal verb be past, that of the dependent verb must also be past; if, however, it be present or future, that of the dependent verb may be either present, past, or future, according as the time of the action is thought of as coincident with the time expressed by the principal verb, anterior to it, or subsequent to it.

Examples:

I expect (or shall expect) to see you there.

I had expected to see you there.

He seems to be able to do his work well.

He seems to have accomplished very little.

He was supposed to have gone the day before.

He said that, if all went well, he stood a good chance to	{	he has no chance at all.
win; but his partner thinks that		he never had even the
		ghost of a chance.
		he will have no chance at all.

General truths, however, from the fact that they are independent of time, should always be expressed in the present tense. For example:

He always maintained that honesty is the best policy.

42. Loose construction. — Loose construction in the sentence may take a variety of forms. Among the most common are the following:

(a.) The placing of some part of the sentence in a wrong position.

Examples:

He was only good when he was happy.

I lived under the dread of being discharged for five months.

Haman is accused of threatening the Jews by Esther in the presence of the king, and is ordered to be hanged.

Almost every year the question as to whether the colleges should dispense with professional football coaches comes up.

The widely prevalent idea that a farmer can hardly become wealthy who devotes his time entirely to the pursuit of agriculture, is an erroneous one.

He was probably a boy about sixteen years of age.

A good rule for the beginner to remember here is that those parts of the sentence which are most closely related in thought should be most closely related in position.

(b.) Improper coördination of clauses.

Examples:

The first to answer our advertisement was a strong-looking Swedish girl who could not speak a word of English, and we knew we could not get along with her.

He has sent me a civil enough letter, but implying that he is prepared to go the length of taking legal action in the matter.

It is a wonderful sight to see the fire eating into the body of the trees, then suddenly they snap off without warning and fall prostrate upon the ground.

The fault in these sentences consists in joining, by means of a coördinating conjunction, parts unlike in kind or rank.

(c.) Lack of correspondence in form between phrases or clauses which are correspondent in function or meaning.

Examples:

She shows us the gentle nature which he possessed, but that he could be driven into terrible passions.

She was tall and slender, with sharp features and also very quick tempered.

By this foundation is meant not only the knowledge gained, but *it* also *includes* the training in methods of study which one acquires through taking regular work. (The words *it* and *includes* should be omitted, since they change the construction of *training*, which should have the same construction as *knowledge*.)

The rule that parts of the sentence which are similar in function or meaning should be similar in

form derives its force from the fact that similarity in form is the readiest way of indicating similarity in function. It may be noted here that those parts which are not correspondent in function should not be strikingly alike in form, inasmuch as similarity in this case would be likely to cause the reader confusion. Hence the following sentence, with its three infinitive phrases following one another, is faulty:

He said that he wished to take his friend with him to visit the capital and to study medicine.

Three different interpretations may be given this sentence, according to which of the characters is thought of as making the visit to the capital, and which as engaging in the study of medicine. The remedy is to change the construction of one or more of the infinitive phrases. The following version, for example, would be free from ambiguity:

He said that he wished to take his friend with him on a visit to the capital, and that he also wished to study medicine.

(d.) Faulty comparisons.

Examples:

He was the man of all others in the world I had most longed to see.

She is regarded as the most beautiful of all her sisters.

It was certainly the steepest hill I ever climbed before.

His work is as good, if not better than, the average.

No course of action could be better suited to our purposes, or so well calculated to strengthen our position, than that.

The snowfall in the mountains has not been as heavy in the last few years, and hence the streams are not so bountifully fed.

The last example is typical of a very common blunder, the incomplete comparison, or comparison not carried out. Elliptical comparisons are allowable only when the ellipsis can easily be supplied from the sentence, or sentences, immediately preceding.

43. Faulty punctuation. — One of the commonest faults in the composition of beginners is bad punctuation. Few beginners, indeed, seem able to punctuate properly.

The function of punctuation, as it is used by modern writers, is to serve as a mechanical means of supplementing the natural means of indicating relationship between sentence elements. It may be true, as a general rule, that the parts of a sentence should be so constructed and so placed that the proper understanding of their relation to each other will not be dependent wholly on the presence or absence of punctuation marks; but it is not always possible to manage this easily. Punctuation is always a legitimate and often a necessary means of indicating the relationship between sentence elements.

In the following sentence, for example, the presence or absence of a comma at a certain point affects the meaning; but to render the meaning quite independent of the punctuation would require a somewhat cumbrous construction in the sentence:

Besides these officers, there are a number of standing committees, — the executive committee, the committees on finance and currency, foreign commerce, internal trade, insurance and charities.

The meaning here is that there is but one committee on insurance and charities. If the writer wished to express the idea that there were two, — one on insurance and one on charities, — he might simply place a comma after the word "insurance"; or he might repeat the word "committee" before each phrase denominating a committee. The simpler method is to use the comma.

Perhaps the most common fault in punctuation is that which fails to distinguish the explanatory from the restrictive clause. The clause which is added simply by way of giving further particulars or explanations, but which is not at all necessary to the sense, ought to be marked off by means of commas; the restrictive clause, on the other hand, which is always necessary to make the sentence complete, ought not to be so distinguished.

The following examples illustrate correct punctuation in cases of this kind:

We have here a clew to the effect of polysyllables, above all in Latin, *where they are so common and make so brave an architecture in the verse.*

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, *which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing.*

Here I find myself talking on a matter *whereof I know very little.*

The hypothesis *which is based on sound scientific knowledge* is sure to have a corresponding value; and that *which is a mere hasty random guess* is likely to have but little value.

In the first two sentences, the clauses italicized are purely explanatory; in the last two, they are restrictive. In the former case, commas are used; in the latter case, they are not.

There are cases, to be sure, where it is next to impossible to tell whether the clause was meant to be restrictive or explanatory; but they do not occur very often. The following is an illustration:

We passed over a burned tract *where the ground was hot beneath the horse's feet*, and between the blazing sides of two mountains.

In cases like this, the punctuation is a matter of indifference.

44. Emphasis in the sentence. — An important thing in sentence structure is getting the emphasis properly placed. Certain of its parts will naturally be more important than other parts; these parts, therefore, ought to be given the most prominent positions, — that is to say, placed either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

From the fact that the last word said has the best chance of remaining longest in the mind, the end is a rather more emphatic position than the beginning. Much depends, however, on the position which the part to be emphasized would naturally occupy. What would be an emphatic position for one part of the sentence would not necessarily be an emphatic position for another. To make any given part specially emphatic, we must put that part into a position it would not normally occupy.

In the normally constructed sentence, the various parts are arranged in the following order: subject, verb, object, verb-modifier. For example:

The inspectors examined the books minutely.

Here no part is given any special prominence. The verb-modifier, to be sure, from the fact that it occupies the most prominent position in the sentence, is slightly more emphatic than any other part; but it has no special emphasis. Special emphasis can come only from an unusual arrangement of the parts. Note, in the following sentences, how the emphasis on a given part varies according to the position that part occupies:

We found inefficiency and corruption everywhere. (Normal arrangement; verb-modifier slightly emphasized.)

Everywhere we found inefficiency and corruption. (Inverted order; object slightly, verb-modifier strongly emphasized.)

Inefficiency and corruption we found everywhere. (Inverted order; verb-modifier slightly, object strongly emphasized.)

Great is Diana of the Ephesians. (Inverted order; predicate adjective emphasized.)

Flashed all their sabres bare. (Inverted order; verb strongly emphasized.)

On whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us is his wonderful invention. (Inverted order; subject emphasized.)

As we see here, any departure from the order in which the parts of a sentence are naturally arranged gives, provided the demands of coherence are satisfied, some emphasis to the part removed from its natural position. Thus, a verb-modifier placed at the end of the sentence is only slightly emphasized; placed at the beginning, it is made strongly emphatic. Similarly, a subject placed at the beginning receives little or no emphasis; placed at the end, it acquires special emphasis. Hence the general rule to secure emphasis in the sentence is, Invert the natural order of the parts, and put the part to be emphasized in the emphatic position furthest removed from the position it would naturally occupy.

45. Classification of sentences based on the principle of suspense. — A special form of emphasis is that usually known as suspense, in which an essential part of the sentence, — the key-word, as it were, — is withheld until the close. Sentences which conform to this principle are termed periodic. In contradistinction, sentences in which something is added after the sentence becomes grammatically complete are called loose. Still another kind is sometimes distinguished, namely, the balanced sentence, in which two contrasted clauses — usually in themselves periodic — are sharply set off against each other.

46. The periodic sentence. — The test for the periodic sentence is the impossibility of stopping at any point within it, short of the end, without at the same time rendering the sentence incomplete. All

merely qualifying or explanatory words, phrases, or clauses are brought in before the things they qualify or explain, and the sentence ends with some word essential to its grammatical completeness. Without that word, the sentence would be unintelligible, and would fall to pieces like an arch without a keystone.

Examples:

The world is neither eternal nor the work of chance.

On whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us is his invention.

On the other hand, your power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption, by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures, and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere, is literally infinite.

The general effect of the periodic sentence, when judiciously used, is to give to style an air of firmness, vigor, and finish. As Professor Minto remarks,¹ however, "The effect that a reader is conscious of receiving varies greatly with the nature of the subject-matter. When the subject is easy and familiar, the reader, finding the sentence or clause come to an end as soon as his expectations are satisfied, receives an agreeable impression of neatness and finish. When the subject-matter is unfamiliar, or when the suspense is unduly prolonged, the periodic structure is intolerably tedious, or intolerably exasperating, according to the temper of the reader." The periodic sentence, therefore, has to be used with caution. Used in

¹ See *Manual of English Prose Literature*, pp. 5, 6.

excess, it offends against ease. In no case, perhaps, ought it to predominate over the loose sentence.

47. The loose sentence. — A sentence is technically called loose if, as has been said, it does not observe the principle of suspense, — that is, if it gives additional qualifying or explanatory matter after the sentence becomes grammatically complete. The test of a loose sentence is that it is always possible to stop at one or more points before the end is reached.

Examples:

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry.

These colors are not universal, but are very general, and are seldom reversed.

The poor fellow was never so friendless but he could befriend some one, never so pinched and wretched but he could give of his crust and speak his word of compassion.

Not long ago a pupil of one of the best private schools in New York maintained that American literature is just as important as English literature, producing in proof two companion manuals, of the same size externally, but, rather unfortunately for the theory, on quite different scales internally.

The effect of the loose sentence, — and the term “loose,” as used here, is, it must be remembered, in no sense a term of disparagement, — is to give freedom, ease, and naturalness to style. It is the typical sentence of conversation, of letter-writing, and of informal discourses in general. Its greatest disadvantage is the ease with which it can degenerate and become rambling or incoherent. Well con-

structed, it is as good, — good, that is, for its own purposes, — as the periodic sentence; badly constructed, it may be very bad indeed.

48. The balanced sentence. — Logically speaking, the classification of sentences into periodic and loose is a complete one: all sentences must be either periodic or loose. Still, it is sometimes convenient to distinguish as a third class the balanced sentence, the sentence in which coördinate clauses are contrasted or set off against each other.

Examples:

Man's face he did not fear; God he always feared.

The Greek quarrel with the body and its desires is that they hinder right thinking; the Hebrew quarrel with them is that they hinder right acting.

There have been many great writers, but perhaps no writer was ever uniformly more agreeable.

Arctic animals are white, desert animals are sand-colored; dwellers among leaves and grass are green; nocturnal animals are dusky.

Like the periodic, the balanced sentence is used mainly in the service of emphasis. Its strong point consists in its ability to present a thought with great sharpness of outline: the balanced sentence is usually very clear and very easily remembered. Its effectiveness lies, however, in its being used sparingly, for it is the most artificial of all the sentence forms.

49. Variety in sentence structure. — In sentence building, the writer's first care, of course, is to see that his sentences are clear and coherent: if he fails

in this, he fails in the most important thing. But he must needs have a care, also, that his sentences are not all built on the same model. Variety is necessary to effectiveness. No style can be pleasing, and therefore in the highest degree effective, if there is monotonous sameness in the sentence structure. Hence the writer must be able to construct sentences not only good in themselves, but capable of harmonizing with each other when woven into a discourse. In actual discourse, a sentence seldom or never can be considered as isolated, as entirely uninfluenced by what goes before, or by what follows it. On the contrary, it is almost always bound up with a number of other sentences which add, in a way, something to its meaning, and which often, indeed, prescribe its very form.

Take, for example, the following three consecutive sentences from a passage in Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*:

One by one the hunters came dropping in; yet such is the activity of the Rocky Mountain sheep that although sixty or seventy men were out in pursuit, not more than half a dozen animals were killed. Of these only one was a full-grown male. He had a pair of horns, the dimensions of which were almost beyond belief.

Here the second sentence derives something of its meaning from the first, and in its turn serves to complete the meaning of the third; in fact, in its structure, as well as in its meaning, it looks both ways. The opening words, *Of these*, refer directly to

the last clause of the first sentence, and for that reason are given the place they occupy; no other position in the sentence would suit them. In like manner, the last words of the sentence determine, in some measure, the form which the third sentence takes.

This interdependence of the sentences of a discourse complicates the matter of sentence building almost infinitely, for the writer is constantly confronted with a changing set of conditions as the factors which go to determine the structure of his sentence. He must not only seek to express a given thought properly; he must also seek to express that thought harmoniously with other thoughts. To do this, he must avoid anything like monotony of expression. He must alternate one kind of sentence with another; must make long sentences, for instance, follow short, and periodic follow loose;—in a word, he must be, as Stevenson aptly puts it, “infinitely various.”

Note what variety there is in the sentence structure of the following passage:

The hours of the evening, when we were once curtained in the friendly dark, sped lightly. Even as with the crickets, night brought to us a certain spirit of rejoicing. It was good to taste the air; good to mark the dawning of the stars, as they increased their glittering company; good, too, to gather stones, and send them crashing down the chute, a wave of light. It seemed in some way, the reward and the fulfillment of the day. So it is when men dwell in the open air; it is one of the simple pleasures that we lose by living cribbed and covered in a house, that, though the coming of the day

is still the most inspiriting, yet day's departure, also, and the return of night refresh, renew, and quiet us; and in the pastures of the dusk we stand, like cattle, exulting in the absence of the load.¹

EXERCISES

1. Point out wherein the following sentences are faulty:

(a.) He is supposed to have fallen, by his father's death, into the hands of his uncle, a vintner, near Charing Cross, who sent him for some time to Dr. Busby, at Westminster; but, not intending to give him any education beyond that of the school, took him, when he was well advanced in literature, to his own house, where the earl of Dorset, celebrated for patronage of genius, found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was so well pleased with his proficiency that he undertook the care and cost of his academical education.

(b.) I think you will find my Latin exercises, at all events, as good as my cousin's.

(c.) I tried to match the ribbons she gave me, during my stay in town.

(d.) The master of the ship continued his course at full speed in thick weather, when he must have known that his vessel was in the immediate neighborhood of the headlands, without taking any steps to verify his position.

(e.) The spirit of the suffering people of France found its embodiment in Joan of Arc, whose execution left a dark stain on the English escutcheon, though her trial took place at the instance of the University of Paris, and almost all concerned in it were Frenchmen of the Burgundian party, while the belief in sorcery was the superstition of the age, and Joan owed to it her victories as well as her cruel death.

¹ R. L. Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters*.

2. Rewrite the following sentences so as to put the emphasis on different parts of the sentence:

(a.) A momentous and auspicious change came noiselessly and almost in disguise about this time.

(b.) I abhor lying from the depths of my soul.

(c.) Romulus, according to the ancient legend, founded Rome.

(d.) The poet's art is the noblest of all arts.

(e.) Of all beings it might seem as if she, held apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved.

3. Rearrange or recast the following sentences in periodic form:

(a.) It was a poor day for the game, so far as the spectators were concerned.

(b.) It cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind that application is the price to be paid for mental acquisitions, and that it is as absurd to expect them without it as to hope for a harvest where we have not sown the seed.

(c.) The German drama is the glory of our contemporary European literature; while the French is its disgrace.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. On self-discipline.
2. True and false success.
3. Is the giving of prizes in school advisable?
4. On keeping an account-book.
5. Some recent discoveries in science.
6. The speed of fast trains.
7. How to take a good photograph.
8. The ideal university.
9. Aërial navigation.
10. The importance of physical culture.

11. Hazing from the point of view of the freshman.
12. Does a college education pay?
13. Sincerity and success.
14. A public office is a public trust.
15. Students should read more widely than they do.
16. Manners in the class-room.
17. Students' dissipations.
18. Is the standard of scholarship in the college high enough?
19. A study of the sentence structure in Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.
20. Irving's picture of country life in England. (See the *Sketch Book*.)
21. Thoreau's life at Walden Pond. (See *Walden*.)

CHAPTER V

WORDS AND PHRASES

50. Style. — “The first merit which attracts in the pages of a good writer, or the talk of a brilliant conversationalist,” says Stevenson, “is the apt choice and contrast of the words employed.”¹ There is no doubt of the truth of this. Not only the first merit, but the greatest merit which a good piece of writing possesses is a pleasing style. In the last analysis, it is style rather than structure which gives discourse its effectiveness. The plan of the composition may be never so perfect logically, the paragraphs and sentences, considered simply as paragraphs and sentences, may be models in themselves; and yet the composition as a whole may leave us unaffected. It may have no power to attract our attention, or it may fail to give us either information or pleasure. In either case, it has failed in its purpose, and failed because of a lack in what we call style.

Precisely wherein lies the secret of style, it is not easy to say. Style is of so subtle and elusive a nature that it defies exact analysis. To a certain extent, obviously, it is dependent upon the structure of the sentences and paragraphs of the discourse, — for we

¹ See his *Style in Literature*.

cannot conceive of a perfect style embodied in sentences and paragraphs glaringly faulty in construction, — but to a much greater extent it is a matter, as Stevenson puts it, of the “apt choice and contrast of the words employed.” We judge a writer’s style, not so much by the way he models his sentences and paragraphs, as by his choice of words and his phrasing, — that is to say, by his ability to find the right word to express his ideas and by his ability at the same time to put those words into effective combinations.

51. The choice of words. — For the effective communication of thought, an all-important prerequisite is a good vocabulary. The writer must have at his command a stock of words adequate to the needs of the thought he wishes to express, otherwise he will be limited in his choice and, in consequence, may not be able to find just the right word to express his idea.

The possession of an adequate vocabulary being taken for granted, then, the writer will find that, in his search for the right word to express his idea, he will have to take into consideration the following things: first, the need of being understood; second, the need of being accurate; and, lastly, the need of being effective. In other words, his diction should be clear, accurate, and forceful.

52. Clearness. — Clearness, of course, is the first thing to be considered. The function of language being to communicate thought, it follows that that

quality in a writer's discourse which enables his thought to be understood is the most desirable. The aim of every writer, therefore, should be to write in such a way as to enable his readers to grasp his thought without difficulty. No one who writes otherwise can be said to possess a good style. A good style is always lucid; and, other things being equal, the more lucid the style the better it is. Every obstacle that hinders the thought of the writer from becoming at once apparent to the reader is a defect of style, and should, if possible, be removed. The reader's attention should be left perfectly free to be concentrated upon the thought, and should not be diverted from the thought to the medium through which that thought is conveyed.

It is obvious, therefore, that the writer is limited in his choice to words which have a well-understood and generally recognized meaning. These words are determined by good usage. Words, it must be remembered, are purely arbitrary or conventional signs; and the convention of one age is not necessarily the same as that of another. In fact, language is continually changing, and we could not if we would use the exact language of any past age. Nor should we want to use the language of any past age. The best English current to-day throughout the whole English-speaking world is the English we should aim to use, not the English of Shakespeare's day, for example. For practical purposes, this English we may regard as the English used by those

writers of the present day most highly esteemed by the best educated people who speak the language. These writers we may consult at any time and find out just what their usage is.

The young writer who would avoid mistakes in the matter of his choice of words would do well, therefore, to make as wide an acquaintance with the standard authors of the present day as possible. If he follows their example, he is not likely to make use of language which will be misunderstood or objected to by his readers. Following their example means, of course, the avoidance of any expressions which can be considered as provincialisms, slang terms, foreign words, obsolete words, or words newly coined without regard to the necessities of the occasion.

Provincialisms, as the name implies, are expressions limited to some particular district. Inasmuch as they are not likely to be understood by many outside of the particular district in which they are current, they ought, obviously, not to be used in discourse addressed to readers in general. For example, the words "roomer," meaning "one who lives in rented rooms," and "tote," meaning "to carry," though current in many parts of the United States, are not current everywhere throughout the country. Still less are they current everywhere throughout the English-speaking world. Words like these should, of course, be avoided by every writer who wishes to appeal to the widest possible number of readers. In

general, it may be said that all words which do not obtain currency wherever the language is spoken should be avoided.

There is one exception to this general rule, however, and that is where there is a difference of usage between the nations which make up the English-speaking world. Here the writer should, naturally, follow the usage of his own country. For example, an American should use the term "elevator," rather than "lift," "ticket-agent," rather than "booking clerk." "Booking-clerk" and "lift" in the sense indicated above are terms used only in England.

Slang terms are, for the most part, colloquialisms not recognized as having established themselves in the language. They differ from provincialisms from the fact that their use is confined, not so much to places as to classes, and also from the fact that there is always a suggestion of vulgarity or bad taste about them. As a rule, they are rather vague in meaning and very short-lived. Hence, apart from the question of taste, they are ill-adapted for use in serious discourse, and should therefore be avoided. To be sure, a distinction has to be made between kinds of slang. Some are wholly bad; others are almost tolerable. For the "vulgar terms used by vulgar men to describe vulgar things"¹ nothing can be said; but for many apt or picturesque expressions which are derived from reputable sports or occupations, but which are still labeled "slang," the case is

¹ The words are those of Brander Matthews.

different. A spoken language is a living thing. It is continually growing and enriching itself with words from various sources; and one of these sources, unquestionably, is slang. Many expressions in the English language which are now recognized by good usage as legitimate were once mere slang terms. "Bias," "hazard," "hit the mark," "within an ace of," for instance, are examples of such expressions. The language has adopted these terms in spite of the fact that they were once slang; but it has adopted them because they were needed. It will adopt others just as readily, provided they also are needed. This, however, is an important proviso; and the young writer who is proposing to use a favorite bit of slang would do well to pause and consider whether or not, in that particular case, the proviso has been met.

Foreign words and obsolete words may be classed together as being, in both cases, quite outside the pale of the language, and therefore not available for ordinary use within it. The use of a foreign or an obsolete word is borrowing; and the only thing that can be said in justification of borrowing words is that the language has need of them, that without them certain ideas cannot adequately be expressed. When this is true, nothing can be said against the use of such terms. In point of fact, English has borrowed and retained thousands of words. "Street," "beef," and "terror," for example, are words that have been borrowed. Yet so thoroughly assimilated have they become that no one but the linguistic

student recognizes them as borrowed words. Borrowing, however, where no need exists is reprehensible. It savors of pedantry, and should be avoided.

As to the use of newly coined words, the caution already given with respect to the use of slang terms and foreign words may be repeated: it is permissible only when the language has need of the new words. With a thinking, progressive people, new things and new ideas are constantly coming into vogue; and so long as this is true, so long will there be a need for new words. To object to these new words would be to deny to the language the means of making a natural growth. At the same time, before a writer introduces, or uses, a new word, he should be quite sure that the need for it really exists. Language is, on the whole, rather impatient of useless terms. It prefers to adapt, wherever possible, old words to new uses, rather than to invent new terms for everything; and whenever it finds itself encumbered with more words to express a given idea than are necessary, it usually shows a tendency to get rid of some of them. As every writer owes something to his language, it is his duty, therefore, to avoid trying to foist useless baggage upon it. Before venturing upon the coinage of new words, he should exhaust the possibilities of those already at his command.

53. Accuracy. — To tell the young writer that in his choice of words he must avoid all those not in

good use is, to be sure, to give him but negative advice; and this, as a rule, does not help him very much. What he wants is, for the most part, positive advice. Out of all the thousands of words which he *may* use, if occasion offers, what, for this particular occasion, is just the word he *should* use? This, for him, is the great question, as it is, indeed, for every writer, practiced or unpracticed. Unfortunately, it is a question which no one but the writer himself can do much to answer. He alone has complete knowledge of the thought to be expressed; hence he alone can tell precisely what is the right word in which to express it. To give him advice that will actually help him find the word he wants is, from the nature of the case, therefore, a matter of no little difficulty. Practically all that can be done is to give him hints as to how he should approach his problem.

In the first place, then, truth to himself demands that he be accurate, that he choose the one word which will, so far as he can see, precisely express the thought he has in mind. At the same time, consideration for his readers demands that he be as intelligible as possible. If these two demands are in harmony, well and good; if not, he must try, if possible, to bring them into some sort of harmony, for it is then only that his words can produce their due effect. Where the two demands cannot well be harmonized, however, and it becomes a question of sacrificing either accuracy or intelligibility, he should sacrifice the former rather than the latter. A word

which is understood, even though it be not just the right word, may come near conveying the idea the writer intended; but a word which is not understood, no matter how exactly used or how accurately it may fit the thought in the writer's mind, is not likely to convey any idea at all.

Much depends, of course, upon the nature of the subject and the character of the audience addressed. In a scientific treatise addressed to scholars, we expect to find accuracy made the point of greatest importance. The writer here may practically assume that whatever terms he may employ will be understood. On the other hand, an address delivered before a popular audience must be couched in terms that any ordinary person will understand. Notice, for example, the difference in phraseology in the following passages, — the first from an article on physiology in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which may be regarded as a work addressed to scholars; the second from Huxley's lecture on *The Physical Basis of Life*, which was addressed to a popular audience:

Similar considerations might be extended to other tissues of the body which are neither nervous nor muscular, and, though engaged in chemical work, are not distinctly secretory or excretory, such, for instance, as the hepatic cells engaged in the elaboration of glycogen. They might also be extended to those tissues in which the katabolites are not exploded and discharged, but retained and massed up in the body for mechanical or other purposes, to cartilage, for instance, the chondrogenous basis or ground-substance which many considerations show to be a product or katabolite of protoplasm.

In order to make the title of this discourse generally intelligible, I have translated the term "Protoplasm," which is the scientific name of the substance of which I am about to speak, by the words "the physical basis of life." I suppose that, to many, the idea that there is such a thing as a physical basis, or matter, of life may be novel — so widely spread is the conception of life as a something which works through matter, but is independent of it; and even those who are aware that matter and life are inseparably connected, may not be prepared for the conclusion plainly suggested by the phrase, "*the* physical basis of life," that there is some one kind of matter which is common to all living beings, and that their endless diversities are bound together by a physical as well as an ideal unity. In fact, when first apprehended, such a doctrine as this appears almost shocking to common sense.

What has been said here with regard to accuracy presupposes that the writer is painstaking, that he makes some real attempt to find the word which exactly fits his idea. This, to be sure, is not the case with most young writers; but even if it were, there would still remain for them the question, How to find the right word? In reply to this question, it may be frankly said that wide reading and at least some experience in writing will alone give one that thorough knowledge of words necessary to the making of the right choice of a word on a given occasion. He who would learn to write, then, should first do a good deal of reading, the more the better. Reading, however, can be supplemented by the judicious use of a dictionary or a book of synonyms; and it is a good plan for the beginner to keep one or the other at his elbow

while writing, and to get into the habit of consulting it whenever he is at a loss for a word.

Suppose, for example, the word wanted is a word to express the idea of "searching for," "finding out" — the cunning and persistent questioning, let us say, of a reluctant witness to get at the truth. General terms to express the idea are "find out," "search for," "discover," "get at." One of these will probably be the first to occur to the writer; but suppose no one of them is satisfactory. Thereupon the dictionary or the book of synonyms is brought into requisition. On turning up in the index of Roget's *Treasury of English Words*, for instance, any one of the terms mentioned, the inquirer will be referred to the section on "Results of Reasoning," where he will find all sorts of expressions for the general idea. Running over these, he will come at length to "ferret out," which, let us suppose, strikes him as the term he wants to use. To reassure himself, he may look it up in the dictionary. There he will find that it means, literally, "to drive out of a lurking-place, as a ferret does a rabbit,"¹ and that figuratively it means "to search out by perseverance and cunning." This is precisely what he wants. He has now a term which exactly fits the thought in his mind, and he will consequently be able to make what he says much more effective than if he had been content with the first general word that occurred to him.

All this means work; but the student has already

¹ See the *Century Dictionary*.

been warned that writing is not an easy task. The labor, however, will not seem so great if a habit of looking up words and discriminating between synonyms is once formed. The second search for a word will be much easier than the first, and every subsequent one a little easier still.

54. Force. — A clear style, as we have seen, is the kind of style a writer should make it his first business to secure. If he could always assume an eagerness on the part of his readers to understand what he had to say, a clear style would be the only kind of style he need concern himself much about. But he cannot always assume so much. Few men are so much on the alert for what may be of interest to them that they will seek it out wherever it may be found. Most men need to have their attention attracted or compelled. To make the communication of his thought effective, therefore, the writer must see that his style possesses force as well as clearness. His words must not only be intelligible and accurately used, but forceful as well.

The forceful word is the word which, when used under given conditions, attracts or compels our attention, makes us feel that it is the fit word to use under those conditions. It is the apt word, the word that not only fits the place in which it is put, but makes us recognize that fact.

As to how the writer is to find the apt word for the occasion, not much can be said, except in a general way. The thought and the occasion determine the

choice, and these, of course, vary. When we analyze an effective bit of writing, however, we find that the main secret of its forcefulness lies in the connotation or suggestiveness of its words. Most words have what we may call a flavor or set of associations which distinguishes them from all other words of the same or similar meaning; and it is this set of associations which enables them to mean so very much more than their denotation or exact signification would warrant. In choosing his words, therefore, the writer should always take into account their connotation. How important this is may be seen if we take a familiar line where the phrases are rich in connotation and try to re-word it so as to bring out the same effect. Notice, for example, the difference between "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," and "Like as a parent feels compassion for his offspring, so the Lord feels compassion for them that fear him." The meaning in the two sentences is almost identical, but what a difference in the effect! "Compassion" is a much more colorless word than "pity"; and as for "parent" and "offspring," they do not have anything like the same suggestiveness for us that the words "father" and "child" have.

The suggestive word is the word perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it is used. There is something in it which immediately and vividly calls up in the reader's mind the idea to be communicated; and there is also something in it which enables it to

call up just the right associated ideas to strengthen and reinforce the main idea.

Observe, in the following bit of description, which, though a little overwrought, is in the main good, how expressive the words are:

The career of the Colorado, from its rise in the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming to its final disappearance in the Gulf of California, seems almost tragic in its swift transitions. It starts out so cheerily upon its course; it is so clear and pure, so sparkling with sunshine and spirit. It dashes down mountain valleys, gurgles under bowlders, swirls over waterfalls, flashes through ravines and gorges. With its sweep and glide and its silvery laugh it seems to lead a merry life. But too soon it plunges into precipitous canyons and enters upon its fierce struggle with the encompassing rock. Now it boils and foams, leaps and strikes, thunders and shatters. For hundreds of miles it wears and worries and undermines the rock to its destruction. During the long centuries it has cut down into the crust of the earth five thousand feet. But ever the stout walls keep casting it back, keep churning it into bubbles, beating it into froth. At last, its canyon course run, exhausted and helpless, it is pushed through the escarpments, thrust out upon the desert, to find its way to the sea as best it can. Its spirit is broken, its vivacity is extinguished, its color is deepened to a dark red — the trail of blood that leads up to the death. Wearily now it drifts across the desert without a ripple, without a moan. Like a wounded snake it drags its length far down the long wastes of sand where the blue waves are flashing on the Californian Gulf. And there it meets — obliteration.

Other things being equal, then, the word to choose for force is the word with the richest connotation,

the greatest amount of suggestiveness. In most cases, this word will be found to be the familiar, rather than the learned term; the specific, rather than the general; the figurative, rather than the literal.

The familiar term, from the very fact of its familiarity, is apt to have more numerous and more vivid associations connected with it than the learned term, and hence has greater suggestiveness. Thus "home" is a more suggestive word than "residence" or "domicile;" "clear," than "pellucid"; "heart-beats," than "systole" and "diastole."

The advantage of specific over general terms, — that is, providing there is a choice between the two kinds, — is to be explained perhaps rather on the score of accuracy than on that of force. The specific word is the more definite, the more precise, and for that reason, if for no other, should be preferred. There is no doubt, however, that the specific term is also, as a rule, the more forceful term. It suggests the concrete, and the concrete impresses itself on the mind more readily than the abstract. Thus Emerson's "Where snow flies there is freedom" is worth a paragraph of generalization on the debilitating effect of a hot climate.

No device for increasing the force and attractiveness of one's style is more common than the use of figures of speech, or expressions which deviate from the literal, straightforward manner of statement. So common is the device, indeed, that in the case of thousands of expressions it has ceased to be a device

at all and has become natural and ordinary usage. Language is rich in these unsuspected figures of speech, the coinage of forgotten or primitive poets, or of those endowed with

The vision and the faculty divine,
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.

“The essentially poetical or figurative character of language may easily be seen by comparing a number of passages from the poets with ordinary prosaic expressions.

“When Wordsworth writes, in *Laodamia*,

The gods approve
The *depth*, and not the tumult of the soul,

the imaginative power of his phrasing at once appeals to us. If, however, we compare such common expressions as ‘He was *deeply* moved,’ ‘profoundly affected,’ ‘from the *bottom* of my heart,’ we recognize the same figure of speech.”¹

The figures of speech most commonly used are simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, and synecdoche.

The simile and the metaphor are figures founded on the principle of comparison, the simile being an explicit, the metaphor an implied comparison.

Examples of these figures are the following:

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself *like a green bay tree*.

¹ Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and Their Ways*, pp. 9, 10.

They (the mountain ranges) have needles that are lifted skyward *like Moslem minarets or cathedral spires*; and at evening, if there is a yellow light, they shine *like brazen spear-points* set against the sky.

Byron, when he suddenly *shot above the horizon*, seemed to be a star almost of the first magnitude; now, however, his luster scarcely warrants one in classing him as even of the second magnitude.

To them (the mosses and lichens), *slow-fingered, constant-hearted*, is entrusted the *weaving of the dark, eternal tapestries of the hills*.

Personification is a figure wherein an inanimate thing or abstract conception is spoken of as having life and mind. Like the metaphor, it is a comparison by implication only.

Examples:

Danger, which *sports* upon the brink of precipices, has been my *playmate*.

Good Sense was the *father* of Wit, *who married a lady* of a collateral line, called Mirth, by *whom he had issue*, Humor.

Metonymy and synecdoche are figures which derive their force from the law of association. In them, one thing is spoken of as another because of some constant relation or association between the two. The figures are usually distinguished, though without very much reason. Thus where the sign is put for the thing signified, the effect for the cause, and so on, the figure is called metonymy; where the part is put for the whole, the individual for the class, and the like, the figure is called synecdoche.

Examples:

Gray hairs should be respected.

The opinion of the *bar* is against it.

The *bench* is the goal of his ambition.

He at least won the applause of the *gallery*.

Some mute, inglorious *Milton* here may rest.

She had seen but sixteen *summers*.

He is a disgrace to his *cloth*.

Not half an hour later I saw the *red-coats* coming around the bend in the road beyond the meadow.

Other figures of speech deserving of note are:

a. Hyperbole, where the thing spoken of is magnified or belittled, as, for example,

Rivers of wine flowed at the banquet.

b. Irony, where the thought to be conveyed is the exact opposite of that apparently expressed, as, for example,

No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom will die with you.

c. Apostrophe, where the absent are spoken of as if present, as, for example,

Unhappy Rousseau: must thou not have thy meed of pity?

It is often supposed that the sole use of figurative language is to serve the purpose of ornamentation rather than of practical utility. This, however, is a mistake. Good figures of speech, as well as adding

to the attractiveness of a writer's style, add also to its force and lucidity. In fact, they should never be used at all unless they add something either to the clearness or to the force of the literal statement. For whatever purpose they are used, however, they should always be as simple and as much in keeping with the subject, or thing to be illustrated, as possible. Moreover, they should always be consistent in themselves. Mixed metaphors are proverbially ineffective.

55. Phrasing. — An apt choice of words is, as we have seen, an essential characteristic of a good style. No less essential a characteristic is good phrasing, or the arrangement of the words in effective combinations. The influence of word upon word is very real, and the writer who does not take this fact into account is blind to part of his duty as a writer. He cannot throw his words together pell-mell, without regard to congruity or euphony, and expect to have them communicate his thought and emotion with effect. If he expects them to accomplish his purpose, he must adapt them to one another. He must see that, in the matter of their connotation, they will sort well together, — that is, that they do not call up associated ideas of an utterly incongruous and contradictory character; and he must also see that they do not make discordant or harsh-sounding combinations.

Sentences like the following, for example, could not have been written by any writer with a proper sense of beauty or propriety in phrasing:

Her pride is here thrown aside and the humorous side of her character revealed.

An ugly rumor had become attached to him that he possessed a yellow streak which sooner or later would come out.

In the first sentence the quick repetition of the "i" sound in "pride," "aside," and "side" is disagreeable; and in the second, the incongruity of putting "rumor" and "attached" together jars upon one. A rumor properly means a sound, and imagine a sound *attaching* itself to anything.

The main things to be kept in mind in phrasing are conciseness, congruity, euphony, and variety.

56. Conciseness. — Only so many words as are necessary should be used in a sentence and no more. Redundancy, or the use of more words than are necessary, is always a bar to the effective communication of thought. Notice the wordiness of the following sentence, for example:

It would indeed be extremely difficult to find, either in the realm of history or in that of fiction, two other characters so different in general make-up and disposition, and yet so congenial to each other even though put under the most trying and exasperating circumstances.

Virtually the same idea can be expressed, and expressed much more effectively, by the following greatly shortened form:

It would be difficult to find either in history or in fiction two other characters so different in disposition and yet so thoroughly congenial to each other.

Redundancy manifests itself usually in one of three more or less distinct forms:

a. Tautology. In this form of redundancy, the idea is repeated in words of the same or similar meaning. For example:

In the Attic commonwealth, it was the privilege (and birth-right) of every citizen (and poet) to rail aloud and in public.

It is a matter notorious (and of common repute) throughout the length and breadth of the land.

One of the most common forms of tautology is the coupling together of synonyms. "Make-up and disposition," "trying and exasperating," in one of the sentences quoted above, are examples of this fault. The coupling of synonyms in this way is justifiable only when the second word really adds a shade to the meaning expressed by the first. In the case of a few phrases, such as "end and aim," "kith and kin," usage has sanctioned the tautology.

b. Pleonasm. Here there is an addition of entirely superfluous words, — that is, words not required to bring out the meaning of the sentence. For example:

He went home laden with (a great many) bundles.

He volunteered (of his own free will and motion) to second any attempt made in that direction.

They (silently) ignored our presence.

As a rule, pleonastic expressions should be avoided. Occasionally, however, if skillfully employed, they

serve to add emphasis. Thus, "We have seen with our eyes," "We have heard with our ears," may in the proper place be more forcible than "We have seen," "We have heard."

c. Circumlocution. This form of redundancy consists in the use of a round-about mode of expression. It cannot be cured, like tautology and pleonasm, simply by cutting out the superfluous words; the only remedy is complete remodeling of the sentence.

For example:

People of this class are timid and suspicious, and owing to this fact prefer to stay in their own rooms, which are usually squalid and dingy in the extreme, rather than be taken to the hospital, where they would have clean and airy quarters.

At least ten words can be saved by recasting this sentence in the following form:

People of this class are timid and suspicious, and would rather, therefore, stay in their own squalid and dingy rooms than be taken to the hospital, where they would have clean and airy quarters.

Common forms of circumlocution are cheap witticisms such as "tonsorial artist" for "barber," euphemistic expressions such as "departed this life" for "died," and such so-called elegant expressions as "devouring element" for "fire," "palatial residence" for "house."

57. Congruity. — Words, like men, have their peculiarities, and, like men, are not apt to attain their

highest efficiency unless they are in perfect accord with their surroundings. A skillful writer, therefore, will seek to adapt his words one to another. He will use no word or phrase whose associations are not in harmony with those of the other words he employs.

Lack of congruity in phrasing is most commonly seen in discourses where frequent use is made of figures of speech or of language bordering on the figurative. In the following sentence from a speech advocating an increase in pensions we have an example of this fault at its worst:

By the light of the twentieth century, amid the din and roar of your boasting patriotism, Union veterans are knocking at the door unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

Less striking instances of the same fault are the following:

His name has been carved in golden characters upon the corridors of time, and its never-fading letters will herald the message of his greatness to the ears of the generations to come.

With voice and pen — both powerful tools in his hands — he labored for its adoption.

58. Euphony. — Discourse, whether written or oral, is always addressed to the ear. The written discourse, to be sure, may never be read aloud, and so may never actually appeal to the ear; but the reader, as his eye catches the written words, cannot help imagining to himself how they would sound if they were uttered aloud. Hence the effect is virtu-

ally the same as if they really were spoken. It behooves a writer, therefore, to pay some attention to the question of euphony.

"Each phrase in literature is built of sounds, as each phrase in music consists of notes. One sound suggests, echoes, demands, and harmonizes with another, and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature."¹

Harsh-sounding combinations of words are disagreeable and should, accordingly, be avoided. The following sentence, for example, would be faultless did it not contain such a harsh-sounding phrase as "rarely seriously:"

In a college football game, where the men are hardened and properly prepared, the players are only rarely seriously injured.

As to how euphony can be secured, not much can be said. This is a matter that must be left almost entirely to the ear of the writer; and if he has not naturally an ear for the musical effects of language, little can be done for him in the way of giving him advice. The avoidance of harsh-sounding combinations of words is, of course, but a negative virtue. What the writer wants to do is to give his style a positively pleasing character.

In general, it may be said that, to secure euphony, there must be, in the first place, free use made of the more pleasing consonantal sounds, such as the liquids

¹ R. L. Stevenson, *Style in Literature*.

and labials; and, in the second place, skillful variation of the stressed vowel sounds. A moderate and unobtrusive use of alliteration also helps to give a pleasing effect. The alliteration, however, must not be overdone. On this question of the use of alliteration Stevenson's remarks are especially worthy of being borne in mind: "It used to be a piece of good advice to all young writers to avoid alliteration; and the advice was sound, in so far as it prevented daubing. None the less for that, was it abominable nonsense, and the mere raving of the blind who will not see. The beauty of the contents of a phrase, or of a sentence, depends implicitly upon alliteration and upon assonance. The vowel demands to be repeated; the consonant demands to be repeated; and both cry aloud to be perpetually varied. You may follow the adventures of a letter through any passage that has particularly pleased you; find it, perhaps, denied awhile, to tantalize the ear; find it fired again at you in a whole broadside; or find it pass into congenerous sounds, one liquid or labial melting away into another."¹

The following passage from De Quincey is not, perhaps, quite a fair sample of English prose, even at its best, inasmuch as it is pitched almost in a poetic key; but notice its lavish use of liquids and labials, the variety of its vowel sounds, its skillfully concealed alliteration, its fluid movement, and the exquisite cadence of its sentences:

¹ *Style in Literature.*

Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the eldest, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring-time of the year, and whilst her own Spring was budding, He recalled her to Himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over her; still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is now within a second and a deeper darkness.¹

59. Variety. — Intimately related to the question of euphony is that of variety. Variety, indeed, is almost indispensable to euphony. The too frequent recurrence of the same sounds or combinations of sounds is as disagreeable in discourse as in music. The writer, therefore, must avoid repetition of this kind. He must seek to give variety to his diction. He must be as careful about not using the same word or phrase over and over again as he is about not fashioning all his sentences and paragraphs on the same model.

¹ From *Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow*.

As Professor Arlo Bates says,¹ however, a word of qualification is necessary here, and that is, that the writer should never be afraid of repeating a word or phrase, provided the repetition is necessary to secure clearness. Such repetition is not disagreeable to the ear; nor is the skillful repeating of words to secure force disagreeable. It is unnecessary repetition only that is disagreeable; and that is the kind of repetition the writer should avoid.

In the following passage from a student's composition, for example, observe how the words "work" and "possess" are disagreeably repeated:

Stevenson's *work* does not rank with that of the great masters in English prose. He has, to be sure, several admirable qualities of style — such, for example, as freshness and lucidity — which few other writers *possess* in the same degree. His *work possesses* the charm of finish, elegance, and power. But in spite of all this, his *work* lacks that indefinable something which a *work* must *possess* in order to have permanency.

To avoid the disagreeable repetition of these words, the passage might be recast in some such form as this:

Stevenson's work does not rank with that of the great English masters in prose. It has, to be sure, several admirable qualities. It has a style which, for freshness and lucidity, has seldom been equaled. It has the charm of finish, elegance, and power. But in spite of all this, it lacks that indefinable something the possession of which is necessary to permanency.

¹ See *Talks on Writing English*, p. 108.

EXERCISES

1. Make a collection of the slang terms you have met with in your reading or conversation. Classify them in some way, — for example, as vulgar, picturesque, almost tolerable, etc.

2. Comment upon the accuracy or effectiveness of the diction in the following sentences:

- a.* His apparent guilt justified his friends in disowning him.
- b.* He was mighty badly cut up about it.
- c.* I left him nicely fixed in his berth in the sleeper.
- d.* I did not sing yesterday as I wished.
- e.* His manners were not always of the most amiable description.
- f.* By this method we shall be able to eliminate the truth from the falsehood.
- g.* When this had been verbally agreed upon, he required me to put it in writing.
- h.* Everything about us indicated that the individual who occupied the room was possessed of exquisite taste.
- i.* His reputation as an orator is so well known that I shall not allude to it.
- j.* He most always hits the mark.

3. Criticise the figures of speech used in the following sentences:

- a.* Mephistopheles unfolds to Faust the abysses of being, and extends before him all intellectual and earthly joys.
- b.* He cast a hasty glance about the room, as if looking for some weapon wherewith to slake the hatred that glittered in his eye.
- c.* Measures like this should not sit supinely by.
- d.* The breakers of the sea are bending beneath the burden of our exports.
- e.* In a moment the thunderbolt was upon them, deluging their country with invaders.
- f.* We must handle this thorny subject carefully, lest we tread on somebody's toes.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. What is a liberal education?
2. College training and business.
3. Advantages of co-education.
4. Evils of examination.
5. The future of the small college.
6. The Y. M. C. A. in college life.
7. The effect of fraternities on college life.
8. The ethics of hazing.
9. Reading poor books a waste of time.
10. Should the main aim of the college course be to give training or to impart information?
11. The disadvantages of being famous.
12. How bank notes are made.
13. A bank clearing house.
14. Do we read too much?
15. Books that have helped me.
16. The pleasures of winter.
17. The value of spraying in fruit growing.
18. Is Scott's picture of mediæval life and ideals a faithful one?
19. The story of Ruth. (Use simple biblical language.)
20. Irving as a delineator of character. (See the *Sketch Book*.)
21. A study of the diction in Lamb's essays.

Part II

**THE TYPE-FORMS OF PROSE
DISCOURSE**

Part II

THE TYPE-FORMS OF PROSE DISCOURSE

CHAPTER VI

CLASSIFICATION OF COMPOSITIONS

60. In the preceding chapters, we have been considering the general principles of composition, the principles applicable to all kinds of compositions, whatever be their subject-matter or purpose. There are certain other principles, however, having a more limited application which it is equally important that we should study. There are, for example, principles which would be readily applicable to compositions of an argumentative kind, but which would have no point if applied, let us say, to compositions of a purely descriptive nature. These special principles it will be found most convenient to treat under the headings of the various kinds or type-forms of discourse.

Literature, under which term, taken in its widest sense, we may include all compositions of whatsoever kind, may be classified in a variety of ways. Setting aside poetry as beyond the scope of our present study, we may, for example, divide prose literature

122 CLASSIFICATION OF COMPOSITIONS

into two classes, the literature of thought and the literature of emotion, according as we conceive the main purpose of the composition to be the conveying of information, or the stimulating of emotion. Again, taking subject-matter as the basis of our classification, we may make such a division as the following: history, fiction, biography, science, travels, etc. For our purposes, however, neither of these classifications is satisfactory. In the first, the classes are too wide or comprehensive; in the second, they are not comprehensive enough. A more convenient classification is the traditional one which groups all prose compositions under the four heads: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation.

The basis of this classification is partly subject-matter and partly the aim or purpose of the discourse. Thus, a composition, when it deals with things, and deals with them in such a way as to appeal to the senses or the imagination of the reader, is said to be a description. On the other hand, if it deals with things in action, — that is, with characters expressing themselves in action, — it is called narration. Again, if it deals with principles, laws, or general ideas, and does so for the purpose of making clear their meaning, it is called exposition. If, however, taking as its subject-matter these same principles, laws, or general ideas, it embodies them in propositions and seeks to establish their truth or falsity, it is called argumentation.

Practically all prose compositions may be included

under these four heads, though other classes are sometimes made, as, for example, criticism and persuasion. These, however, are more properly to be regarded as subclasses than as coördinate with those just mentioned. Criticism is in reality a variety of exposition, and persuasion, a particular kind of argumentation.

It must not be supposed that every composition belongs wholly to one or another of these classes. The classification is not a very exact one, and from the nature of the case cannot be. In the actual business of writing, it is seldom that a writer wishes to confine himself exclusively to description or to exposition, as the case may be. His method of treating his subject may call now for description, now for exposition, and again for narration or argumentation. Hence it is not often that we find an example of any one kind of discourse in its purity. On the contrary, we find the various kinds more or less intermingled, shading into one another, in fact, and often to such an extent that it is impossible to tell which kind is the predominant one. In most cases, however, one type-form or another will predominate and give its character to the composition.

Each of these type-forms has its own set of special principles applicable to it alone. The consideration of these special principles will form the business of the succeeding chapters.

124 CLASSIFICATION OF COMPOSITIONS

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. The right way to study.
2. What it costs to go to college.
3. How to get on in the world.
4. Ants as farmers.
5. Water polo as a college sport.
6. A country newspaper.
7. It pays to be polite.
8. On writing themes.
9. Popular superstitions.
10. The recent vogue of the animal story.
11. My outside reading.
12. My favorite character in Dickens.

CHAPTER VII

DESCRIPTION

61. Definition. — Description, as we have seen, is that kind of writing which deals with things as they appeal to the senses or to the imagination. Its aim is to give the reader an idea of the appearance of things. Hence we may define it, simply, as the portrayal of things by means of language.

Ordinarily when we speak of description we mean the portrayal of physical things, whether real or imaginary, — things that appeal to the senses, such as trees, houses, landscapes, etc. The term is also applied, however, to the delineation of characters, mental states, etc., — things purely immaterial or spiritual.

Thus the second of the two following passages is no less a description than the first:

On three sides of Edinburgh, the country slopes downward from the city, here to the sea, there to the fat farms of Haddington, there to the mineral fields of Linlithgow. On the south alone, it keeps rising until it not only out-tops the Castle but looks down on Arthur's Seat. The character of the neighborhood is pretty strongly marked by a scarcity of hedges; by many stone walls of varying height; by a fair amount of timber, some of it well grown, but apt to be of a bushy, northern profile and poor in foliage; by here and there a little river, Esk or Leith or Almond, busily journey-

ing to the bottom of its glen; and from almost every point by a peep of the sea or the hills. There is no lack of variety, and yet most of the elements are common to all parts; and the southern district is alone distinguished by considerable summits and a wide view.¹

Dorothea by this time had turned cold again, and now threw herself back helplessly in her chair. She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changed in its aspect: her husband's conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them — and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. Her world was in a state of convulsive change; the only thing she could say distinctly to herself was, that she must wait and think anew. One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband, who had had hidden thoughts, perhaps perverting everything she said and did. Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw. It had never before entered her mind that he could, under any circumstances, be her lover: conceive the effect of the sudden revelation that another had thought of him in that light — that perhaps he himself had been conscious of such a possibility, — and this with the hurrying, crowding vision of unfitting conditions, and questions not to be solved.²

62. Relation to other forms of discourse. — Description is very common in literature, though it is seldom used alone. Ordinarily, it is used as an

¹ R. L. Stevenson, *Edinburgh*.

² George Eliot, *Middlemarch*.

aid to other forms of writing, particularly narration, to which, indeed, it is well-nigh indispensable. In books of travel — books which aim, as a rule, to give an impression of things seen — we may sometimes find examples of almost pure description; yet even in such books there is, in most cases, a thread of story mingled with the description. Description and narration, in fact, are so closely related in aim and so helpful to each other that they are almost always used together. Description furnishes the setting for narration, without which it would be but a bare record of events; narration, in its turn, gives life and activity to description, without which it would soon become wearisome.

In some of its forms, description is also very closely related to exposition. Thus, while ordinarily it deals only with individuals, it sometimes deals, or seems to deal, like exposition, with types, as in the following:

The panther, or as he is more commonly called, the mountain lion, is no such square-built mass of muscle, no such bundle of energy as the wild-cat, though much longer and larger. The figure is wiry and serpentine, and has all the action and grace of the tiger. It is preëminently a figure for crouching, sneaking, springing, and dragging down. His struggle for life is perhaps not so desperate as that of the cats, because he lives high up in the desert mountains where game is more plentiful; but he is a very good struggler for all that. Occasionally one hears his cry in the night (a cry that stops the yelp of the coyote very quickly and sets the ears of the jack-rabbit a-trembling) but he is seldom seen unless sought for. Even then the seeker does not usually care to look for

him, or at him too long. He has the tiger eye, and his jaw and claw are too powerful to be trifled with. He will not attack one unless at bay or wounded; but as a mountain prowler he is the terror of the young deer, the mountain sheep, and the rabbit family.¹

No particular, individual panther is here described, but rather the panther in general. It will be observed, however, that the writer imagines the type-form as an individual, and pictures it for us as such. His aim is not to give such an exact account of the animal's habits or relationship to other animals as will enable us to classify it, but merely to give us some idea of its appearance and characteristic actions; that is to say, his aim is mainly portrayal, not explanation, and hence his account is to be regarded as description rather than exposition.

More nearly explanatory in purpose, and therefore more nearly verging upon exposition, is the following:

The woodchuck always burrows on a side-hill. This enables him to guard against being drowned out, by making the termination of the hole higher than the entrance. He digs in slantingly for about two or three feet, then makes a sharp upward turn and keeps nearly parallel with the surface of the ground for a distance of eight or ten feet farther, according to the grade. Here he makes his nest and passes the winter, holing up in October or November and coming out again in April. This is a long sleep, and is rendered possible only by the amount of fat with which the system has become

¹ John C. Van Dyke, *The Desert*, p. 157.

stored during the summer. The fire of life still burns, but very faintly and slowly, as with the draughts all closed and the ashes heaped up. Respiration is continued, but at longer intervals, and all the vital processes are nearly at a standstill. Dig one out during hibernation . . . and you find it a mere inanimate ball, that suffers itself to be moved and rolled about without showing signs of awakening. But bring it in by the fire, and it presently unrolls and opens its eyes, and crawls feebly about, and if left to itself will seek some dark hole or corner, roll itself up again, and resume its former condition.¹

Taken by itself, this might be regarded as either description or exposition. The general purpose of the essay from which it is taken, however, is descriptive; hence it ought, perhaps, to be called description. In the following example, we have description frankly and openly passing into exposition:

Perhaps the most beautiful deception known to the desert is the one oftenest seen — mirage. Every one is more or less familiar with it, for it appears in some form wherever the air is heated, thickened, or has strata of different densities. It shows on the water, on the grass plains, over ploughed fields or gravel roads, on roadbeds of railways; but the bare desert with its strong heat-radiation is primarily its home. The cause of its appearance — or at least one of its appearances — is familiar knowledge, but it may be well to state it in dictionary terms: "An optical illusion due to excessive bending of light-rays in traversing adjacent layers of air of widely different densities, whereby distorted, displaced, or inverted images are produced."²

¹ John Burroughs, *Pepacton*, p. 181.

² Van Dyke, *The Desert*, p. 117.

63. Kinds of description. — From the illustrations given above, it is obvious that, while in most cases the main aim of description is portrayal, in much of what is ordinarily called description the purpose is no less distinctly explanatory. Hence, according as one or other of these purposes is most prominent, we may have two kinds of description. If the aim of the writer is to convey information, mainly, we have ordinary or, as it is sometimes called, scientific description. If, on the other hand, his aim is portrayal, mainly, — that is, if he seeks to stimulate the reader's imagination in such a way as to enable him to form a mental picture of the thing described, we have description proper, or, as it is sometimes termed, artistic description.

64. Scientific description. — What we have called ordinary or scientific description occupies a sort of midway position between exposition and description proper. No hard and fast lines can be drawn on either side. In general, whenever we have a composition dealing with things or persons, and dealing with them mainly for the purpose of giving us information about them, then we have ordinary or scientific description.

Compositions of this kind are very common. They fill our newspapers and magazines, comprise most of our books of travel, and form, perhaps, the greater part of our reading. They never rank very high as literature. Their aim is, for the most part, practical; their business is to serve the everyday needs of life.

65. The method of scientific description. — The method of scientific description is, in the main, an enumeration of the parts or characteristics of the thing to be described according to some simple or obvious plan. It aims to give us such an account of the thing as will satisfy our interest or curiosity; it appeals to the intellect, and never, as a rule, attempts to stimulate the imagination. Hence, in description of this kind, the writer never makes any particular effort to select or group details with a view to producing in the reader's mind an image of the thing described.

As an illustration of the method, the following will suffice:

The redwood is the glory of the Coast Range. It extends along the western slope, in a nearly continuous belt about ten miles wide, from beyond the Oregon boundary to the south of Santa Cruz, a distance of nearly four hundred miles, and in massive, sustained grandeur and closeness of growth surpasses all the other timber woods of the world. Trees from ten to fifteen feet in diameter and three hundred feet high are not uncommon, and a few attain a height of three hundred and fifty or even four hundred, with a diameter at the base of fifteen to twenty feet or more, while the ground beneath them is a garden of fresh, exuberant ferns, lilies, gaultheria, and rhododendron. This grand tree, *Sequoia sempervirens*, is surpassed in size only by its near relative, *Sequoia gigantea*, or Big Tree, of the Sierra Nevada, if, indeed, it is surpassed. The *sempervirens* is certainly the taller of the two. The *gigantea* attains a greater girth, and is heavier, more noble in port, and more sublimely beautiful. These two *Sequoias* are all that are known to exist in the

world, though in former geological times the genus was common and had many species. The redwood is restricted to the Coast Range, and the Big Tree to the Sierra.¹

66. **Artistic description.** — In description proper, or artistic description, the main aim is not, as in ordinary description, to give information, but to portray. To a certain extent, the writer here seeks to produce by means of words what the painter produces by means of colors — an illusion. That is, he seeks to conjure up in the mind of the reader an image or picture of the thing described. Hence his appeal is not to the intellect primarily, but to the imagination.

An illustration will make the point clear:

The sun was still concealed below the opposite hilltops, though it was shining already, not twenty feet above my head, on our own mountain slope. But the scene, beyond a few near features, was entirely changed. Napa Valley was gone; gone were all the lower slopes and woody foothills of the range; and in their place, not a thousand feet below me, rolled a great level ocean. It was as though I had gone to bed the night before, safe in a nook of inland mountains, and had awakened in a bay upon the coast. I had seen these inundations from below; at Calistoga I had risen and gone abroad in the early morning, coughing and sneezing, under fathoms on fathoms of gray sea vapor, like a cloudy sky — a dull sight for the artist, and a painful experience for the invalid. But to sit aloft one's self in the pure air and under the unclouded dome of heaven, and thus look down on the submergence of the valley, was strangely different and even delightful to the eyes. Far away were the hilltops like little

¹ John Muir, *Our National Parks*, p. 349, ff.

islands. Nearer, a smoky surf beat about the foot of precipices and poured into all the coves of these rough mountains. The color of that fog ocean was a thing never to be forgotten. For an instant, among the Hebrides and just about sundown, I have seen something like it on the sea itself. But the white was not so opaline; nor was there, what surprisingly increased the effect, that breathless, crystal stillness over all. Even in its gentlest mood the salt sea travails, moaning among the weeds or lipping on the sand; but that vast fog ocean lay in a trance of silence, nor did the sweet air of the morning tremble with a sound.¹

It is not Stevenson's purpose here to make any explanation of the phenomenon he has observed; rather, he wishes to present us with the vision as it appeared to him. In other words, he tries to portray or picture it for us.

67. Selection and arrangement of details.—In description of the kind just exemplified, the aim is, as we have seen, to portray or picture for us the object as a whole. The materials used are, of course, the same as those used in description of the ordinary kind, namely, details associated in space or in thought. These individual details have not here, however, as is the case in scientific description, any interest in and for themselves. Their sole value lies in their power to aid the reader's imagination in forming a picture of the whole; and this power depends to a certain extent upon the way in which the details are related.

Hence in selecting the details to be used in a description of the artistic kind care should be taken, in

¹ R. L. Stevenson, *The Silverado Squatters*.

the first place, that only those which are most prominent or striking be chosen. These are what we may term the suggestive details, — the details that best stimulate the reader's mind to form the desired image or impression. Moreover, only so many details as are necessary should be used, and no more. Superfluous details have a confusing effect, and tend to blur the reader's mental picture. Distinctness of impression is one of the first things, — the very first thing, in fact, — that should be aimed at in description. The picture in the reader's mind should be clear and distinct; and that this may be so, only those details should be mentioned which are at once suggestive and necessary as a means of calling up the desired image.

With regard to the arrangement of these details, the method ordinarily employed is that of simple enumeration according to some obvious plan. Mere enumeration without a plan will not serve the writer's purpose. The details must be arranged with as much regard as possible to the aid they give one another in their image or picture suggesting capacity. Bad arrangement will often spoil the effect of the most admirably chosen details.

68. The point of view. — As to what details are most striking and what arrangement is likely to be most effective, the writer can best judge if he keeps always in mind the point of view from which he observes the thing to be described. That point of view must, of course, be definite, else the writer's own

impression will be vague and his chances of producing a vivid impression on the mind of the reader correspondingly slim. No one can make another see clearly what he does not see clearly himself. If, for instance, the writer wishes to describe a bit of scenery, he must first get a clear image of it in his own mind, which can be done only by viewing it, in reality or in imagination, from some point in the foreground. Viewed from this point, certain features of the scene will stand out more prominently than others and will relate themselves in a particular way. These features are the suggestive ones, and this particular relation the one that the writer should seek to reproduce.

Note the distinctness of this sketch from Stevenson's *Edinburgh*, a distinctness attained by fixing the point of view and by attending carefully to the perspective:

Kirk Yetton forms the northeastern angle of the range; thence, the Pentlands trend off to south and west. From the summit you look over a great expanse of champaign sloping to the sea and behold a large variety of distant hills. There are the hills of Fife, the hills of Peebles, the Lammermoors and the Ochils, more or less mountainous in outline, more or less blue with distance. Of the Pentlands themselves, you see a field of wild heathery peaks with a pond gleaming in the midst; and to that side the view is as desolate as if you were looking into Galloway or Applecross. To turn to the other, is like a piece of travel. Far out in the lowlands Edinburgh shows herself, making a great smoke on clear days and spreading her suburbs about her for miles; the Castle rises darkly in the midst; and close by, Arthur's Seat makes a bold figure in the landscape. All around, cultivated fields,

and woods, and smoking villages, and white country roads, diversify the uneven surface of the land. Trains crawl slowly abroad upon the railway lines; little ships are tacking in the Firth; the shadow of a mountainous cloud, as large as a parish, travels before the wind; the wind itself ruffles the wood and standing corn, and sends pulses of varying color across the landscape. So you sit, like Jupiter upon Olympus, and look down from afar upon men's life. The city is as silent as a city of the dead: from all its humming thoroughfares, not a voice, not a footfall, reaches you upon the hill. The sea surf, the cries of plowmen, the streams and the mill-wheels, the birds and the wind, keep up an animated concert through the plain; from farm to farm, dogs and crowing cocks contend together in defiance; and yet from this Olympian station, except for the whispering rumor of a train, the world has fallen into a dead silence and the business of town and country grown voiceless in your ears. A crying hill-bird, the bleat of a sheep, a wind singing in the dry grass, seem not so much to interrupt, as to accompany, the stillness; but to the spiritual ear, the whole scene makes a music at once human and rural, and discourses pleasant reflections on the destiny of man. The spiry habitable city, ships, the divided fields, and browsing herds, and the straight highways, tell visibly of man's active and comfortable ways; and you may be never so laggard and never so unimpressible, but there is something in the view that spirits up your blood and puts you in the vein for cheerful labor.

The same careful attention to point of view and grouping of details is observable in the following sketch of an interior by Hawthorne:

The sun, meanwhile, if not already above the horizon, was ascending nearer and nearer to its verge. A few clouds, floating high upward, caught some of the earliest light, and

threw down its golden gleam on the windows of all the houses in the street, not forgetting the House of the Seven Gables, which — many such sunrises as it had witnessed — looked cheerfully at the present one. The reflected radiance served to show, pretty distinctly, the aspect and arrangement of the room which Hepzibah entered, after descending the stairs. It was a low-studded room, with a beam across the ceiling, panelled with dark wood, and having a large chimney-piece, set around with pictured tiles, but now closed by an iron fire-board, through which ran the funnel of a modern stove. There was a carpet on the floor, originally of rich texture, but so worn and faded, in these latter years, that its once brilliant figure had quite vanished into one indistinguishable hue. In the way of furniture, there were two tables: one, constructed with perplexing intricacy and exhibiting as many feet as a centipede; the other, most delicately wrought, with four long and slender legs, so apparently frail that it was almost incredible what a length of time the ancient tea-table had stood upon them. Half a dozen chairs stood about the room, straight and stiff, and so ingeniously contrived for the discomfort of the human person that they were irksome even to sight, and conveyed the ugliest possible idea of the state of society to which they could have been adapted. One exception there was, however, in a very antique elbow-chair, with a high back, carved elaborately in oak, and a roomy depth within its arms, that made up, by its spacious comprehensiveness, for the lack of any of those artistic curves which abound in a modern chair.¹

The term "point of view," as applied to descriptions like those just quoted, means, of course, the real viewpoint, the point from which the things described are, or may be, actually seen. Applied to descrip-

¹ *The House of Seven Gables.*

tions of character or mental states, however, the term, obviously, must be taken in a metaphorical sense. In this case, to say that a writer must keep his point of view in mind, means simply that he must select and group the details he mentions in such a way that they will appeal to the reader's imagination as a whole, and not as separate and unrelated fragments. This he can do most readily by making some one trait of the character or mental state described the dominating trait or principle of the whole, and subordinating all others to it.

Note, for example, the effectiveness of the following description of the character of Clifford Pyncheon, after his return from prison, where his likeness to a child is made the dominating trait:

But it would be no fair picture of Clifford's state of mind, were we to represent him as continually or prevaillingly wretched. On the contrary, there was no other man in the city, we are bold to affirm, of so much as half his years, who enjoyed so many lightsome and griefless moments as himself. He had no burden of care upon him; there were none of those questions and contingencies with the future to be settled, which wear away all other lives, and render them not worth having by the very process of providing for their support. In this respect, he was a child, — a child for the whole term of his existence, be it long or short. Indeed, his life seemed to be standing still at a period little in advance of childhood, and to cluster all his reminiscences about that epoch; just as, after the torpor of a heavy blow, the sufferer's reviving consciousness goes back to a moment considerably behind the accident that stupefied him. He sometimes told Phœbe and Hepzibah his dreams, in which he invariably played the part

of a child, or a very young man. So vivid were they, in his relation of them, that he once held a dispute with his sister as to the particular figure or print of a chintz morning-dress, which he had seen their mother wear, in the dream of the preceding night. Hepzibah, piquing herself on a woman's accuracy in such matters, held it to be slightly different from what Clifford described; but producing the very gown from an old trunk, it proved to be identical with his remembrance of it. Had Clifford, every time that he emerged out of dreams so lifelike, undergone the torture of transformation from a boy into an old and broken man, the daily recurrence of the shock would have been too much to bear. It would have caused an acute agony to thrill, from the morning twilight, all the day through, until bedtime; and even then would have mingled a dull, inscrutable pain, and pallid hue of misfortune, with the visionary bloom and adolescence of his slumber. But the nightly moonshine interwove itself with the morning mist, and enveloped him as in a robe, which he hugged about his person, and seldom let realities pierce through; he was not often quite awake, but slept open-eyed, and perhaps fancied himself most dreaming then.

Thus, lingering always so near his childhood, he had sympathies with children, and kept his heart the fresher thereby, like a reservoir into which rivulets were pouring, not far from the fountain-head. Though prevented, by a subtile sense of propriety, from desiring to associate with them, he loved few things better than to look out of the arched window, and see a little girl driving her hoop along the sidewalk, or schoolboys at a game of ball. Their voices, also, were very pleasant to him, heard at a distance, all swarming and intermingling together, as flies do in a sunny room.¹

69. Movement in description. — Ordinarily, the point of view in description is fixed. It is permissible,

¹ Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables*.

however, to introduce movement into description, and thus have the viewpoint a changing one; but in this case the reader must be kept duly informed as to each change in the point of view. If this is not done, the result will almost surely be confusion. The picture will have a blurred effect like that produced in a photograph when the camera is shifted during the exposure of the plate.

As an illustration of how the point of view may change, yet without loss of distinctness in the resulting picture, take the following:

A moment after passing the gate you are in twilight, — though the sun may be blinding on the white road without. All about you is a green gloaming, up through which you see immense trunks rising. Follow the first path that slopes up on your left as you proceed, if you wish to obtain the best general view of the place in the shortest possible time. As you proceed, the garden on your right deepens more and more into a sort of ravine; — on your left rises a sort of foliage-shrouded cliff; and all this in a beautiful crepuscular dimness, made by the foliage of great trees meeting overhead. Palms rooted a hundred feet below you hold their heads a hundred feet above you; yet they can barely reach the light. Farther on the ravine widens to frame in two tiny lakes, dotted with artificial islands, which are miniatures of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Dominica: these are covered with tropical plants, many of which are total strangers even here: they are natives of India, Senegambia, Algeria, and the most eastern East. Arborescent ferns of unfamiliar elegance curve up from path-verge or lake-brink; and the great *arbre-du-voyageur* outspreads its colossal fan. Giant lianas droop down over the way in loops and festoons; tapering green cords, which are creepers descending to take root, hang everywhere;

and parasites with stems as thick as cables coil about the trees like boas. Trunks shooting up out of sight, into the green wilderness above, display no bark; you cannot guess what sort of trees they are; they are so thickly wrapped in creepers as to seem pillars of leaves. Between you and the sky, where everything is fighting for the sun, there is an almost unbroken vault of leaves, a cloudy green confusion in which nothing particular is distinguishable.

You come to breaks now and then in the green steep to your left, — openings created for cascades pouring down from one mossed basin of brown stone to another, — or gaps occupied by flights of stone steps, green with mosses, and chocolate-colored by age. These steps lead to loftier paths; and all the stone-work — the grottos, bridges, basins, terraces, steps, — are darkened by time and velveted with mossy things. It is of another century, this garden: special ordinances were passed concerning it during the French Revolution. It is very quaint; it suggests an art spirit as old as Versailles, or older; but it is indescribably beautiful even now.

At last you near the end, to hear the roar of falling water; — there is a break in the vault of green above the bed of a river below you; and at a sudden turn you come in sight of the cascade. Before you is the Morne itself; and against the burst of descending light you discern a precipice-verge. Over it, down one green furrow in its brow, tumbles the rolling foam of a cataract, like falling smoke, to be caught below in a succession of moss-covered basins. The first clear leap of the water is nearly seventy feet. . . .

Returning by another path, you may have a view of other cascades — though none so imposing. But they are beautiful; and you will not soon forget the effect of one — flanked at its summit by white-stemmed palms which lift their leaves so high into the light that the loftiness of them gives the sensation of vertigo. Dizzy also the magnificence of the great colonnade of palmistes and angelins, two hundred feet high,

through which you pass if you follow the river-path from the cascade, — the famed *Allée des duels*.¹

Note, also, the distinctness of the following series of mental pictures, where, though the point of view changes frequently, there is not the slightest trace of blur or confusion:

The scaffold of the pillory was a point of view that revealed to Hester Prynne the entire track along which she had been treading since her happy infancy. Standing on that miserable eminence, she saw again her native village, in Old England, and her paternal home; a decayed house of gray stone, with a poverty-stricken aspect, but retaining a half-obliterated shield of arms over the portal, in token of antique gentility. She saw her father's face, with its bald brow, and reverend white beard, that flowed over the old-fashioned Elizabethan ruff; her mother's, too, with the look of heedful and anxious love which it always wore in her remembrance, and which, even since her death, had so often laid the impediment of a gentle remonstrance in her daughter's pathway. She saw her own face, glowing with girlish beauty, and illuminating all the interior of the dusky mirror in which she had been wont to gaze at it. There she beheld another countenance, of a man well stricken in years, a pale, thin, scholar-like visage, with eyes dim and bleared by the lamplight that had served them to pore over many ponderous books. Yet those same bleared optics had a strange, penetrating power, when it was their owner's purpose to read the human soul. This figure of the study and the cloister, as Hester Prynne's womanly fancy failed not to recall, was slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right. Next rose before her, in memory's picture-gallery, the intricate and narrow thoroughfares, the tall, gray houses, the huge cathedrals, and the

¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies*, pp. 60-62.

public edifices, ancient in date and quaint in architecture, of a Continental city; where a new life had awaited her, still in connection with the misshapen scholar; a new life, but feeding itself on time-worn materials, like a tuft of green moss on a crumbling wall. Lastly, in lieu of these shifting scenes, came back the rude market-place of the Puritan settlement, with all the townspeople assembled and levelling their stern regards at Hester Prynne, yes, at herself, who stood on the scaffold of the pillory, an infant on her arm, and the letter *A*, in scarlet, fantastically embroidered with gold-thread, upon her bosom.¹

Description of this kind differs, obviously, in very few respects from narration. The passage just quoted might almost, in fact, be regarded as narration. Hawthorne's purpose is to review rapidly, yet with as much vividness as possible, the course of events in the early life of his heroine. To do this, he adopts the descriptive, rather than the narrative method; but he puts as much movement into his description as possible.

The use of movement in description may, indeed, be carried so far as to cause the description to pass frankly into narration. The following passage from Kipling's *City of Dreadful Night*, where the main purpose is clearly descriptive though the method is narrative, will illustrate the point:

The dense wet heat that hung over the face of the land, like a blanket, prevented all hope of sleep in the first instance. The cicalas helped the heat; and the yelling jackals the cicalas. It was impossible to sit still in the dark, empty, echoing house

¹ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*.

and watch the punkah beat the dead air. So, at ten o'clock of the night, I set my walking-stick on end in the middle of the garden, and waited to see how it would fall. It pointed directly down the moonlit road that leads to the City of Dreadful Night. The sound of its fall disturbed a hare. She limped from her form and ran across to a disused Mahomedan burial-ground, where the jawless skulls and rough-butted shank-bones, heartlessly exposed by the July rains, glimmered like mother o' pearl on the rain-channelled soil. The heated air and the heavy earth had driven the very dead upward for coolness' sake. The hare limped on; snuffed curiously at a fragment of a smoke-stained lamp-shard, and died out, in the shadow of a clump of tamarisk trees.

70. **Indirect Description.** — A method of artistic description that remains to be noted is that in which the writer aims to present a picture, not directly by means of an enumeration of details, but indirectly through the medium of the effect which the object produces upon the observer. This method is sometimes called description by effect though a better name is, perhaps, indirect description. Here details are wholly, or almost wholly, suppressed and the feelings or emotions of the observer dwelt upon in such a way as to induce sympathetic emotions in the reader, thus enabling his imagination to produce the desired picture.

A good illustration of this method may be seen in Fielding's description of the acting of Garrick in *Tom Jones*, where Partridge is made to exhibit real terror in consequence of the simulated terror of the actor. The following passages, also, illustrate the method:

Outside countless jackals howled incessantly, and as I listened for the first time to that which was to be my lullaby for so many months, I could scarcely believe that I heard the voices of four-footed beasts. It was as though hundreds of ill-fed, ill-housed, half-human babies were weeping and wailing in dismal misery. One could almost believe that the graves had opened, and that the hapless infants of the past were bemoaning their sufferings once more. Is it because the jackal robs the graves of the dead that his note is so weird and ghoul-like? ¹

At the beginning, while gazing south, east, west, to the rim of the world, all laughed, shouted, interchanged the quick delight of new impressions! every face was radiant. Now all look serious; — none speak. The first physical joy of finding oneself on this point in violet air, exalted above the hills, soon yields to other emotions inspired by the mighty vision and the colossal peace of the heights. Dominating all, I think, is the consciousness of the awful antiquity of what one is looking upon; — such a sensation, perhaps, as of old found utterance in that tremendous question of the Book of Job! — “Wast thou brought forth before the hills?” And the blue multitude of the peaks, the perpetual congregation of the morns, seem to chorus in the vast resplendence, — telling of Nature’s eternal youth, and the passionless permanence of that about us and beyond us and beneath, — until something like the fullness of a great grief begins to weigh at the heart. For all this astonishment of beauty, all this majesty of light and form and color, will surely endure; — marvellous as now, — after we shall have lain down to sleep where no dreams come, and may never arise from the dust of our rest to look upon it.²

¹ J. P. Peters, *Nippur*, Vol. I, p. 73.

² View from the summit of Mont Pelée; Lafcadio Hearn, *Two Years in the French West Indies*, p. 293.

71. Vividness in description. — In descriptive writing, especially of the artistic kind, vividness is an essential quality. Here, it must be remembered, the aim is to make the reader see things without giving him anything in the way of visual stimulus. His imagination must be left to do the work of picture forming without any assistance from the senses. Obviously, he is at a great disadvantage as compared with the writer. He cannot hope to have as clear an impression of the object described as the writer himself had, for he has not the object before him. He is trying to see the thing at second hand, as it were, and that he may get a clear impression of it, his imagination must be stimulated by all the devices at the writer's command.

One of the devices most frequently used for the sake of vividness is the comparison of the object to be described to something obviously very familiar to the reader. In descriptions of landscapes, this often takes the form of a sketch or outline which follows the lines of some well-known figure. Thoreau, for example, compares Cape Cod to a bare and bended arm :

Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts! the shoulder is at Buzzard's Bay; the elbow, or crazy-bone, at Cape Mallebarre; the wrist at Truro; and the sandy fist at Provincetown, — behind which the State stands on her guard, with her back to the Green Mountains, and her feet planted on the floor of the ocean, like an athlete protecting her Bay, — boxing with northeast storms, and, ever and anon, heaving

up her Atlantic adversary from the lap of earth, — ready to thrust forward her other fist, which keeps guard the while upon her breast at Cape Ann.¹

In like manner, Stevenson compares the Bay of Monterey to a bent fishing-hook:

The Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank; the mouth of the Salinas river is at the middle of the bend; and Monterey itself is cozily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and northwest, and then westward to enclose the bay.²

To contrast one thing with another is also a device frequently used for the attainment of vividness. For example:

Rosamund and Mary had been talking faster than their male friends. They did not think of sitting down, but stood at the toilette-table near the window while Rosamund took off her hat, adjusted her veil, and applied little touches of her finger-tips to her hair — hair of infantine fairness, neither flaxen nor yellow. Mary Garth seemed all the plainer standing at an angle between the two nymphs — the one in the glass, and the one out of it, who looked at each other with eyes of heavenly blue, deep enough to hold the most exquisite mean-

¹ *Cape Cod.*

² *Across the Plains.*

ings an ingenious beholder could put into them, and deep enough to hide the meanings of the owner if these should happen to be less exquisite. Only a few children in Middlemarch looked blonde by the side of Rosamund, and the slim figure displayed by her riding-habit had delicate undulations. In fact, most men in Middlemarch, except her brothers, held that Miss Vincy was the best girl in the world, and some called her an angel. Mary Garth, on the contrary, had the aspect of an ordinary sinner! she was brown; her curly dark hair was rough and stubborn; her stature was low; and it would not be true to declare, in satisfactory antithesis, that she had all the virtues.¹

Whatever device to secure vividness the descriptive writer uses, however, he will need to be particular as to the choice of his words. The word that most nearly corresponds to the thing, that best brings out what is characteristic in it, is the word to be used; and the writer must make it his business, if possible, to find that word. Vague, inexact, or inappropriate diction is fatal to effectiveness in description. The expressive verb, the apt figure, the picturesque epithet, — these are the things that count.

Note the suggestiveness of the italicized words and phrases in the following:

The design upon that fan represented only the white rushing burst of one great wave on a beach, and sea-birds *shooting in exultation* through the *blue* overhead. But to behold it was worth all the trouble of the journey. It was a *glory of light, a thunder of motion, a triumph of sea-wind*, all in one.¹

¹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch*.

¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Out of the East*, pp. 1, 2.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 149

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life *heavy-laden, half-vanquished*, still *swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment*. Brow and head were round, and of *massive weight*, but the face was *flabby* and *irresolute*. The *deep* eyes, of a light hazel, were as *full of sorrow* as of *inspiration*; *confused pain* looked *mildly* from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called *flabby* and *irresolute*; *expressive of weakness* under *possibility of strength*. He *hung loosely* on his limbs, with knees bent, and *stooping attitude*; in walking, he rather *shuffled* than decisively stepped; and a lady once remarked, he could never fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually *shifted*, in *corkscrew fashion*, and kept trying both. A *heavy-laden, high-aspiring* and surely *much-suffering* man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a *plaintive snuffle* and *sing-song*; he spoke as if preaching, — you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things.¹

EXERCISES

1. Analyze Stevenson's descriptive method in *An Inland Voyage*, taking into account (a) selection and grouping of details, (b) ways of indicating the point of view, (c) movement, and (d) vividness.
2. Cite a passage from some narrative where the descriptive method is used for the purpose of reviewing a series of events.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. A village loafer.
2. A twilight scene.
3. Birds that stay with us all winter.

¹ Carlyle's picture of Coleridge: *Life of Sterling*.

4. A busy street.
 5. A country post-office at mail-time.
 6. An accident.
 7. A runaway.
 8. School days.
 9. A ramble through the woods.
 10. A fire.
 11. The pleasures of gardening.
 12. Hobbies.
 13. A peep at the moon through a telescope.
 14. A Roman house.
 15. Midsummer on a prairie farm.
 16. Ranching in the West.
 17. A California fruit farm.
 18. An apple orchard in blossom.
 19. A balloon ascension.
 20. A street scene from the top of a modern sky-scraper.
 21. Newspaper cartoons.
 22. A typical newsboy.
 23. A visit to the slums.
 24. A trip to the mountains.
 25. A winter trip to Cuba.
 26. My favorite poem.
 27. The treatment of nature in Bryant's poetry.
 28. A study of the character of Richard III in Shakespeare's play of the same name.
 29. The descriptive element in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*.
 30. The humor of Charles Dickens.
 31. The characterization in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.
 32. Poe's use of description in the short story as compared with that of Hawthorne.
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CHAPTER VIII

NARRATION

72. Definition. — Broadly speaking, narration may be defined as that kind of composition in which the main purpose is to recount a series of events.

Ordinarily, this recounting is done in such a way as to make of the series of events recorded a definite unit having a distinct beginning and a distinct conclusion. In chronicling, however, or narration of the crudest kind, this is not always so. Here, little or no effort is made to relate the events to each other. The interest is expected to be centered in the events themselves, and not in any connected series. Each event is mentioned for its own sake, and no one would lose much of its value were it detached from the others.

A passage from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle will illustrate the point:

851. In this year Ceorl the alderman with the men of Devonshire fought against the heathen at Wicganborough, and there slew a great many and obtained the victory. In this same year King Aethelstan and Earl Ealchere defeated a great army at Sandwich in Kent, and captured nine ships and put the others to flight. This was the first year that the heathen remained (in England) over winter. In this same year also, there came to the mouth of the Thames 350 ships, and they stormed Canterbury and London, and put to flight

Beorhtwulf, king of the Mercians, with his army. Then went they south into Surrey, and at Actea King Aethelwulf and his son Aethelbald with the army of the West Saxons fought against them and obtained the victory; and in that battle there was the greatest slaughter among the heathen invaders of which we have ever heard unto this day.

Narration of this kind is crude in the extreme, so crude, indeed, that it is scarcely to be regarded as narration at all. It centers the interest not in the whole, but in the parts; and it makes no attempt to unify the parts. In narration proper, however, the events are always unified, and the main interest is centered in the whole rather than in the parts. That is to say, the incidents or events enter into the narration, not merely because they possess an interest in and for themselves, but because they have a bearing upon other incidents or events mentioned in the series and upon the central idea which the whole is to embody.

The difference between narration of this kind and mere chronicling will become evident if one compares, for example, the following fable with the extract from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle given above:

The frogs, living an easy, free sort of life among the lakes and ponds, once prayed Jupiter to send them a king. Jupiter, being then in a merry mood, threw them a log, saying as he did so, "There, then, is a king for you." Awed by the splash, the frogs watched their king in fear and trembling, till at last, encouraged by his stillness, one more daring than the rest jumped upon the shoulder of his monarch. Soon, many others followed his example, and made merry on the back of

their unresisting king. Speedily tiring of such a torpid ruler, they again petitioned Jupiter, and asked him to send them something more like a king. This time he sent them a stork, who tossed them about and gobbled them up without mercy. They lost no time, therefore, in beseeching the god to give them again their former state. "No, no," replied he; "a king that did you no harm did not please you. Make the best of the one you have, or you may chance to get a worse one in his place."

73. Relation to other forms of composition. — Narration, like description, is seldom found pure and simple. It may, in fact, be used with all other kinds of composition; but its most usual accompaniment is description. It might, indeed, almost be regarded as dependent upon description. Events must happen in some definite place and must concern some definite characters; and both places and characters are ordinarily presented to the reader by means of description. Hence, whenever the writer finds it necessary to drop his story and dwell upon the scenes wherein the events take place or upon the characters concerned in the action, description must be brought in as an aid to narration.

Narration is, of course, extremely common. It may, indeed, be said to be, as Stevenson remarks, "the typical mood of literature." No other form is older, and no other form is more often used. No other form, moreover, has such a hold upon man's interest. For some reason or other, we are more interested in what men do than in what they say or

think. Hence those works which deal mainly with action, with what has happened to man, either in the world of reality or in the world of imagination, have most chance of arousing and holding our attention. In fact, no work wherein action plays but a very small part can have much chance of being permanently interesting.

74. Kinds of narration. — The forms which narration may assume are numerous. Most representative of the type are history, biography, and the novel. History and biography deal with real events and real characters, and aim to present a truthful account of them. The novel, on the other hand, deals for the most part with imaginary events, and is not bound to any strict observance of literal truth. In their essential characteristics, however, all three forms are alike. The method of handling events depends in a very slight degree, if at all, upon whether those events are real or imaginary. A novel, for instance, may take the form of a biography and be indistinguishable from it except on the score of conformity to fact. History and biography can be differentiated from fiction only by their aim or purpose. Their purpose being, in the main, to convey information, they must give an exact account of what has happened, and can adapt facts only in so far as such adaptation is consistent with a truthful presentation of the events recorded. In fiction there is no such limitation. Here the writer's facts are, or may be, purely imaginary, and can be adapted at will,

provided they are kept in harmony with each other. The novelist appeals not so much to the understanding as to the imagination and the emotions. His aim is to please, and he is bound only by the laws of consistency and of beauty, the observance of which is for him a necessity if he would please. In short, while the historian and the biographer are bound to the observance of specific truth, the writer of fiction is bound to the observance of general truth only. In all cases, however, events as events — that is, whether real or imaginary — are treated in the same way.

75. Elements of narration. — An analysis of any good piece of narrative composition will reveal the fact that it is made up of three well-defined elements, namely, plot, characterization, and what may be called setting. These elements are not always present in the same ratio, but each must be present in some degree before we can have what may properly be termed narration.

76. Plot. — In narration proper, as we have seen, the aim of the writer is to recount a series of events in such a way as to center the interest in the whole rather than in the events themselves taken separately. This is done by giving to the narrative what is called a plot or complication of the events. The events or incidents which form the possible material for a narrative are linked together by means of a twofold relation, — by a time relation, and by a causal relation. If the writer concerns himself merely with the time relation of the events he uses, we have the crudest

kind of narration, or chronicling. If, however, he brings out the causal as well as the time relation of these events, we have narration proper, or narration with plot. Plot may therefore be defined as the causal connection given to a series of events in virtue of which that series becomes a definite whole having a distinct beginning and a distinct ending.

The term "plot" is here used in the widest possible sense. In a narrower sense, the term is often used as meaning a complication or entanglement of the events in a fictitious narrative the solution for which we expect to find at or near the end of the narrative. Hence plot has sometimes even been defined as a combination of the events of a story intended to excite interest and create curiosity as to the outcome. This definition, however, tends to place the emphasis on the wrong thing. A good plot may excite the reader's interest to such an extent that he will be curious as to the outcome, and a bad or indifferent plot may fail to do this; but much will depend upon the reader. Interest in the plot is a question of degree, not of kind.

Plot of the simplest kind may be illustrated by the following short tale from Andersen's *Fairy Tales*:

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

It was terribly cold; it snowed and was already almost dark, and evening came on, the last evening of the year. In the cold and gloom a poor little girl, bareheaded and barefoot, was walking through the streets. When she left her own

house she certainly had slippers on; but of what use were they? They were big slippers, and her mother had used them till then, so big were they. The little maid lost them as she slipped across the road, where two carriages were rattling by terribly fast. One slipper was not to be found again, and a boy had seized the other, and run away with it. He thought he could use it very well as a cradle, some day when he had children of his own. So now the little girl went with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and a bundle of them in her hand. No one had bought of her all day, and no one had given her a farthing.

Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along, a picture of misery, poor little girl! The snowflakes covered her long fair hair, which fell in pretty curls over her neck; but she did not think of that now. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a glorious smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. Yes, she thought of that!

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down cowering. She had drawn up her little feet, but she was still colder, and she did not dare to go home, for she had sold no matches, and did not bring a farthing of money. From her father she would certainly receive a beating, and besides it was cold at home, for they had nothing over them but a roof through which the wind whistled, though the largest rents had been stopped with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost benumbed with the cold! Ah! a match might do her good, if she could only draw one from the bundle, and rub it against the wall, and warm her hands at it. She drew one out. R-r-atch! how it sputtered and burned! It was a warm, bright flame, like a little candle, when she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light! It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great polished stove, with bright brass feet and a brass cover.

How the fire burned! how comfortable it was! But the little flame went out, and the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the burned match in her hand.

A second was rubbed against the wall. It burned up, and when the light fell upon the wall it became transparent, like a thin veil, and she could see through it into the room. On the table a snow-white cloth was spread; upon it stood a shining dinner service; the roast goose smoked gloriously, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more splendid to behold, the goose hopped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and only the thick, damp, cold wall was before her. She lighted another match. Then she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree; it was greater and more ornamental than the one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of candles burned upon the green branches, and colored pictures like those in the print shops looked down upon them. The little girl stretched forth her hand toward them; then the match went out. The Christmas lights mounted higher. She saw them now as stars in the sky: one of them fell down, forming a long line of fire.

"Now some one is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her when a star fell down a soul mounted up to God. She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the brightness the old grandmother stood clear and shining, mild and lovely.

"Grandmother!" cried the child, "oh! take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm fire, the warm food, and the great glorious Christmas tree!"

And she hastily rubbed the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a glow that it became brighter than in the

middle of the day: grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew in brightness and joy above the earth, very, very high; and up there was neither cold, nor hunger, nor care — they were with God!

But in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the poor girl with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year. The New Year's sun rose upon a little corpse! The child sat there, stiff and cold, with the matches of which one bundle was burned. "She wanted to warm herself," the people said. No one imagined what a beautiful thing she had seen, and in what glory she had gone in with her grandmother to the New Year's Day.

The causal connection of the events here is obvious. From the beginning, the culmination — the death of the little girl by freezing — is foreseen, and everything in the tale leads up to it. This inevitableness of the conclusion is the mark of a good plot. Everything in the narrative should point unmistakably to the conclusion, and one should feel when one reaches it that it is the inevitable result of the coöperation or conflict of all the forces that have taken part in the action.

77. Characterization. — In the center of every event or incident that becomes material for the narrator is an actor or character. It is not necessary that this character should always be a human being. It may be a beast, an unseen force of nature, or even an inanimate stock or stone, provided that, for the occasion, it is regarded as a being having life and intelligence. A story without a character of some kind is an impossibility.

As a rule, we are apt to be most interested in stories where the characters are human beings much like ourselves; and the more nearly like ourselves these characters are the more likely are we to be interested in them and their doings. Hence it is part of the business of every good story-teller to make his characters as lifelike as possible. Not that he should subordinate his story to the delineation of character, as is sometimes done in certain types of modern fiction. Far from it. The story — that is to say, the complication or interweaving of the events with which he is concerned — should always be first in his mind, and characterization second. As Stevenson remarks, though with perhaps just a touch of exaggeration, "It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realized in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance."¹

The ways in which a narrator may delineate character are various. Following more or less closely the descriptive method, he may portray his characters directly by telling us what they are like, or indirectly by telling us what they have said and done; or again, adopting the dramatic method, he may

¹ *A Gossip on Romance.*

make them reveal, through their own words and actions, their individuality themselves, as persons do in real life. The last way is perhaps the best, since it is the most natural; but it is seldom used alone. Ordinarily, a writer will give us a hint as to what his characters are like, then place them before us acting and talking, and thus allow us to judge of them for ourselves.

Observe how Stevenson, in the following passage, for example, first gives us a general notion of Dr. Desprez, and then follows it up with a conversation between the Doctor and the waif, Jean-Marie, — a conversation admirable for the revelation it gives us of both characters:

Dr. Desprez always rose early. Before the smoke arose, before the first cart rattled over the bridge to the day's labor in the fields, he was to be found wandering in his garden. Now he would pick a bunch of grapes; now he would eat a big pear under the trellis; now he would draw all sorts of fancies on the path with the end of his cane; now he would go down and watch the river running endlessly past the timber landing-place at which he moored his boat. There was no time, he used to say, for making theories like the early morning. "I rise earlier than any one else in the village," he once boasted. "It is a fair consequence that I know more and wish to do less with my knowledge."

The morning after he had been summoned to the dying mountebank, the Doctor visited the wharf at the tail of his garden, and had a long look at the running water. This he called prayer; but whether his adorations were addressed to the goddess Hygeia or some more orthodox deity, never

plainly appeared. For he had uttered doubtful oracles, sometimes declaring that a river was the type of bodily health, sometimes extolling it as the great moral preacher, continually preaching peace, continuity, and diligence to man's tormented spirits. After he had watched a mile or so of the clear water running by before his eyes, seen a fish or two come to the surface with a gleam of silver, and sufficiently admired the long shadows of the trees falling half across the river from the opposite bank, with patches of moving sunlight in between, he strolled once more up the garden and through his house into the street, feeling cool and renovated.

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On one of the posts before Tentaillon's carriage entry he espied a little dark figure perched in a meditative attitude, and immediately recognized Jean-Marie.

"Aha!" he said, stopping before him humorously, with a hand on either knee. "So we rise early in the morning, do we? It appears to me that we have all the vices of a philosopher."

The boy got to his feet and made a grave salutation.

"And how is our patient?" asked Desprez.

It appeared the patient was about the same.

"And why do you rise early in the morning?" he pursued.

Jean-Marie, after a long silence, professed that he hardly knew.

"You hardly know?" repeated Desprez. "We hardly know anything, my man, until we try to learn. Interrogate your consciousness. Come, push me this inquiry home. Do you like it?"

"Yes," said the boy slowly; "yes, I like it."

"And why do you like it?" continued the Doctor. "(We are now pursuing the Socratic method.) Why do you like it?"

"It is quiet," answered Jean-Marie; "and I have nothing to do; and then I feel as if I were good."

Dr. Desprez took a seat at the opposite side. He was beginning to take an interest in the talk, for the boy plainly thought before he spoke, and tried to answer truly. "It appears you have a taste for feeling good," said the Doctor. "Now, there you puzzle me extremely; for I thought you said you were a thief; and the two are incompatible."

"Is it very bad to steal?" asked Jean-Marie.

"Such is the general opinion, little boy," replied the Doctor.

"No; but I mean as I stole," exclaimed the other. "For I had no choice. I think it is surely right to have bread; it must be right to have bread, there comes so plain a want of it. And then they beat me cruelly if I returned with nothing," he added. "I was not ignorant of right and wrong; for before that I had been well taught by a priest, who was very kind to me." (The Doctor made a horrible grimace at the word "priest.") "But it seemed to me, when one had nothing to eat and was beaten, it was a different affair. I would not have stolen for tartlets, I believe; but any one would steal for baker's bread."

"And so I suppose," said the Doctor, with a rising sneer, "you prayed God to forgive you, and explained the case to him at length."

"Why, sir?" asked Jean-Marie. "I do not see."

"Your priest would see, however," retorted Desprez.

"Would he?" asked the boy, troubled for the first time.

"I should have thought God would have known."

"Eh?" snarled the Doctor.

"I should have thought God would have understood me," replied the other. "You do not, I see; but then it was God that made me think so, was it not?"

"Little boy, little boy," said Dr. Desprez, "I told you already you had the vices of philosophy; if you display the virtues also, I must go. I am a student of the blessed laws of health, an observer of plain and temperate nature in her common walks; and I cannot preserve my equanimity in presence of a monster. Do you understand?"

"No, sir," said the boy.

"I will make my meaning clear to you," replied the Doctor. "Look there at the sky — behind the belfry first, where it is so light, and then up and up, turning your chin back, right to the top of the dome, where it is already as blue as at noon. Is not that a beautiful color? Does it not please the heart? We have seen it all our lives, until it has grown in with our familiar thoughts. Now," changing his tone, "suppose that sky to become suddenly of a live and fiery amber, like the color of clear coals, and growing scarlet toward the top—I do not say it would be any the less beautiful; but would you like it as well?"

"I suppose not," answered Jean-Marie.

"Neither do I like you," returned the Doctor, roughly. "I hate all odd people, and you are the most curious little boy in all the world."

Jean-Marie seemed to ponder for a while, and then raised his head again and looked over at the Doctor with an air of candid inquiry. "But are not you a very curious gentleman?" he asked.

The Doctor threw away his stick, bounded on the boy, clasped him to his bosom, and kissed him on both cheeks. "Admirable, admirable imp!" he cried. "What a morning, what an hour for a theorist of forty-two! No," he continued, apostrophizing heaven, "I did not know such boys existed; I was ignorant they made them so; I had doubted of my race; and now! It is like," he added, picking up his stick, "like a lovers' meeting."

78. Setting. — The setting of a narrative is simply the background or scene in which the characters are placed. Whatever the writer tells us about the time and place in which the events of his story happen or the circumstances under which these events take place, constitutes this setting.

The usefulness of setting in a narrative is apparent. Without it, there would be an air of unreality about everything in the story. Setting serves to give definiteness to the narrative, and to throw the characters into relief. A certain amount of it is necessary in every narrative; but it should always be strictly subordinated to the story, or the recounting of the events. Long descriptions of scenery are a clog upon the action, and are apt to prove tedious to the reader.

A passage from the opening of Poe's *Gold Bug* will serve to illustrate the ordinary use of setting:

Many years ago, I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand. He was of an ancient Huguenot family, and had once been wealthy; but a series of misfortunes had reduced him to want. To avoid the mortifications consequent upon his disasters, he left New Orleans, the city of his forefathers, and took up his residence at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

This island is a very singular one. It consists of little else than the sea sand, and is about three miles long. Its breadth at no point exceeds a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the mainland by a scarcely perceptible creek, oozing its way through a wilderness of reeds and slime, a favorite resort of the marsh-hen. The vegetation, as might be supposed, is scant, or at least dwarfish. No trees of any magnitude are to be seen. Near the western extremity, where Fort Moultrie stands, and where are some miserable frame buildings, tenanted, during summer, by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever, may be found, indeed, the bristly palmetto; but the whole island, with the exception of this western point, and a line of hard, white beach on the sea-coast, is covered

with a dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle so much prized by the horticulturists of England. The shrub here often attains the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and forms an almost impenetrable coppice, burthening the air with its fragrance.

In the inmost recesses of this coppice, not far from the eastern or more remote end of the island, Legrand had built himself a small hut, which he occupied when I first, by mere accident, made his acquaintance. . . . His chief amusements were gunning and fishing, or sauntering along the beach and through the myrtles, in quest of shells or entomological specimens — his collection of the latter might have been envied by a Swammerdam. In these excursions he was usually accompanied by an old negro, called Jupiter, who had been manumitted before the reverses of the family, but who could be induced, neither by threats nor by promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young "Massa Will." . . .

The winters in the latitude of Sullivan's Island are seldom very severe, and in the fall of the year it is a rare event indeed when a fire is considered necessary. About the middle of October, 18—, there occurred, however, a day of remarkable chilliness. Just before sunset I scrambled my way through the evergreens to the hut of my friend, whom I had not visited for several weeks — my residence being at that time in Charleston, a distance of nine miles from the island, while the facilities of passage and repassage were very far behind those of the present day. Upon reaching the hut I rapped, as was my custom, and getting no reply, sought for the key where I knew it was secreted, unlocked the door and went in. A fine fire was blazing upon the hearth. It was a novelty, and by no means an ungrateful one. I threw off an overcoat, took an arm-chair by the crackling logs, and waited patiently the arrival of my hosts.

79. The point of view in narration. — To the writer who recounts a series of events, two points of view are possible, — that of an actor, or that of an observer; and according as the writer takes the one or the other of these points of view we may have two more or less distinct methods in narration. In the first case, the writer may narrate the events as they had relation to himself, thus making himself the center of interest in his story. This is the method of the autobiographer and of the novelist who makes his hero tell his own story. It is a method which allows of very great distinctness and vividness in presenting a sequence of events, since the point of view is at all times definite and readily recognizable. Its limitations, of course, are apparent. It is inapplicable to cases where the writer has no personal knowledge, real or assumed, of the events he wishes to recount, and to cases where, as in history, a wide survey is to be taken and many threads of story woven together. The second method — that in which the writer takes the point of view of an observer — is the only method applicable in these cases. It is the ordinary method in narration, and may be called the method of the historian. Here the narrator has the greatest possible amount of liberty. He can look at the events he recounts or the characters he portrays from all sides; he can bring together a number of characters and have them act and react on one another; and he can take up several groups of characters one after another and have several series of events merge in one cul-

mination — all of which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for him to do were he himself one of the actors in his story.

Impartiality is ordinarily expected of a narrator who takes the point of view of an observer. It is only in history and biography, however, that this impartiality is completely realizable. The novelist usually sympathizes more or less fully with his chief characters. Whether consciously or not, he tries to see things as they see them, with the result that his story is biased in their favor. In a historian, whose aim is to set things down as they actually happened, this would be a fault; but in a novelist, it is not only excusable but necessary. The novelist's aim is to appeal to our emotions, to awaken our sympathy for his characters; and the only way he can do this is by being in sympathy with them himself. Note, for example, the effect of the following, where Hawthorne has delicately attuned his feeling to that of his heroine:

In this manner, Hester Prynne came to have a part to perform in the world. With her native energy of character, and rare capacity, it could not entirely cast her off, although it had set a mark upon her, more intolerable to a woman's heart than that which branded the brow of Cain. In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. She stood apart from moral

interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside, and can no longer make itself seen or felt; no more smile with the household joy, nor mourn with the kindred sorrow; or, should it succeed in manifesting its forbidden sympathy, awakening only terror and horrible repugnance. These emotions, in fact, and its bitterest scorn besides, seemed to be the only portion that she retained in the universal heart. It was not an age of delicacy; and her position, although she understood it well, and was in little danger of forgetting it, was often brought before her vivid self-perception, like a new anguish, by the rudest touch upon the tenderest spot. The poor, as we have already said, whom she sought out to be the objects of her bounty, often reviled the hand that was stretched forth to succor them. Dames of elevated rank, likewise, whose doors she entered in the way of her occupation, were accustomed to distil drops of bitterness into her heart; sometimes through that alchemy of quiet malice, by which women can concoct a subtle poison from ordinary trifles; and sometimes, also, by a coarser expression, that fell upon the sufferer's defenseless breast like a rough blow upon an ulcerated wound. Hester had schooled herself long and well; she never responded to these attacks, save by a flush of crimson that rose irrepressibly over her pale cheek, and again subsided into the depths of her bosom. She was patient, — a martyr, indeed, — but she forbore to pray for her enemies; lest, in spite of her forgiving aspirations, the words of the blessing should stubbornly twist themselves into a curse.¹

80. Selection of material. — One of the greatest problems the narrator has to grapple with is the selection of his material. Obviously he cannot tell everything that has happened in connection with his story,

¹ *The Scarlet Letter.*

though many novices in the art of story-telling make the mistake of supposing that he can and should. Only those details which are significant of his purpose must be used, and no more. Irrelevant or unimportant details add weight without contributing any corresponding strength, and are therefore a clog upon the story. Such details should be rejected. Such details, also, as tend to lead the reader's interest away from the main thread of the story should be religiously avoided. Digressions, however interesting in themselves, are seldom or never justifiable; they destroy continuity, and are to be condemned on that score, if on no other.

To the novice, narration would seem to require less planning, less art, than almost any other kind of composition. A good story ought, as it were, to tell itself. Those who speak from experience, however, say otherwise. Of all the arts, the art of story-telling is one of the most difficult. The beginner, therefore, must not delude himself with the belief that his story will somehow manage itself. It will not. If he would succeed as a narrator, he must select and arrange his material with the utmost care possible. He should get, in the first place, a clear conception of the course his narrative is to take, so that the main points of his story will stand out with some distinctness; then he should fill in between these points with the most significant details available. Significant details, he should remember, moreover, are those, and those only, which serve to help forward the plot,

or to give the reader a clearer and better understanding of the characters or situations involved; all others are irrelevant and should be rejected.

81. Order of events. — The natural order to follow in recounting a series of events is that in which the events happened. For various reasons, however, it is sometimes desirable to depart from this order. Where the narrative is made up of several threads of story more or less separate from one another, as in history for example, the writer must often neglect the strict chronological order of the events, and shift his attention now to this, now to that thread of the story, keeping always in mind, of course, the fact that these threads should all lead to one point, namely, the culmination. If this shifting is done skillfully, no confusion in the mind of the reader is likely to result; but it invariably entails some loss of vividness in the narrative and should never be resorted to unless unavoidable.

In beginning a narrative, also, — especially in the case of fiction, — it is sometimes desirable to depart from the chronological order of events. For the sake of getting the reader interested in his story as quickly as possible, a novelist will often begin in the very middle of it, or with some striking incident or situation. Once secure of the reader's attention, he will go back and recount the events that lead up to his beginning.

Acting on this principle, Dickens, for example, begins *Hard Times* with a speech, as follows:

"Now what I want is facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only inform the minds of reasoning animals upon facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to facts, sir."

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square fore-finger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve.

82. Movement and suspense. — Whether a narrative begins with the first event in the series to be recounted, or with some other, there should be a general and steady movement forward to the end. Nothing in narration is more important than this. Movement, progression from one event to that which follows, is the very essence of narration. If a story does not go forward, it is no story at all.

Movement may be retarded by crowding the narrative with incidents which have little or no bearing upon the main course of action, or by the introduction of extended descriptive passages. In either case there is apt to be a tax upon the reader's patience. As already said, incidents which have no significance for the purpose in hand clog the story, and for that reason should be avoided. The same thing may be said of long descriptions. They interrupt the course of the story and should be used, if at all, as rarely as possible. Setting is, to be sure, an important element

in a narrative, but it should always be kept strictly subordinate to the story or action.

With regard to the rate of movement, that will depend, of course, largely upon the fullness with which the events are recounted. Whatever the general rate of movement in a narrative may be, however, it should always be varied somewhat, so that in the crises, or moments of highest excitement, it will be comparatively rapid, and again in the quieter scenes, slow. Often, indeed, it will be found effective, especially in fiction, purposely to retard the movement and keep the reader in suspense for a moment. Particularly is this true in the management of crises. Before important incidents, suspense, provided it is not unduly prolonged, always heightens the interest in the story.

Notice how, in the following account of the start in a boat race, the writer, by skillfully dwelling upon unimportant details, and so retarding the movement before the critical moment, the actual start, heightens the interest in that moment:

Hark! — the first gun. The report sent Tom's heart into his mouth again. Several of the boats pushed off at once into the stream; and the crowd of men on the bank began to be agitated, as it were, by the shadow of the coming excitement. The St. Ambrose fingered their oars, put a last dash of grease on their rowlocks, and settled their feet against the stretchers.

"Shall we push her off?" asked bow.

"No; I can give you another minute," said Miller, who was sitting, watch in hand, in the stern; "only be smart when I give the word."

The captain turned on his seat, and looked up the boat. His face was quiet, but full of confidence, which seemed to pass from him into the crew. Tom felt calmer and stronger, as he met his eye. "Now mind, boys, don't quicken," he said cheerily; "four short strokes to get way on her, and then steady. Here, pass up the lemon."

And he took a sliced lemon out of his pocket, put a small piece in his own mouth, and then handed it to Blake, who followed his example, and passed it on. Each man took a piece; and just as bow had secured the end, Miller called out, —

"Now, jackets off, and get her head out steadily."

The jackets were thrown on shore, and gathered up by the boatmen in attendance. The crew poised their oars, No. 2 pushing out her head, and the captain doing the same for the stern. Miller took the starting rope in his hand.

"How the wind catches her stern," he said; "here, pay out the rope one of you. No, not you — some fellow with a strong hand. Yes, you'll do," he went on, as Hardy stepped down the bank and took hold of the rope; "let me have it foot by foot as I want it. Not too quick; make the most of it — that'll do. Two and three, just dip your oars in to give her way."

The rope paid out steadily, and the boat settled to her place. But now the wind rose again, and the stern drifted in towards the bank.

"You must back her a bit, Miller, and keep her a little further out or our oars on stroke side will catch the bank."

"So I see; curse the wind. Back her, one stroke all. Back her, I say!" shouted Miller.

It is no easy matter to get a crew to back her an inch just now, particularly as there are in her two men who have never rowed a race before, except in the torpids, and one who has never rowed a race in his life.

However, back she comes; the starting rope slackens in

Miller's left hand, and the stroke, unshipping his oar, pushes the stern gently out again.

There goes the second gun! one short minute more, and we are off. Short minute, indeed! you wouldn't say so if you were in the boat, with your heart in your mouth and trembling all over like a man with the palsy. Those sixty seconds before the starting gun in your first race — why, they are a little lifetime.

"By Jove, we are drifting in again," said Miller, in horror. The captain looked grim but said nothing; it was too late now for him to be unshipping again. "Here, catch hold of the long boat-hook, and fend her off."

Hardy, to whom this was addressed, seized the boat-hook, and, standing with one foot in the water, pressed the end of the boat-hook against the gunwale, at the full stretch of his arm, and so, by main force, kept the stern out. There was just room for the stroke oars to dip, and that was all. The starting rope was as taut as a harp-string: will Miller's left hand hold out?

It is an awful moment. But the coxswain, though almost dragged backwards off his seat, is equal to the occasion. He holds his watch in his right hand with the tiller rope.

"Eight seconds more only. Look out for the flash. Remember, all eyes in the boat."

There it comes, at last — the flash of the starting gun. Long before the sound of the report can roll up the river, the whole pent-up life and energy which has been held in leash, as it were, for the last six minutes, is loose, and breaks away with a bound and a dash which he who has felt it will remember for his life, but the like of which, will he ever feel it again? The starting ropes drop from the coxswain's hands, the oars flash into the water, and gleam on the feather, the spray flies from them, and the boats leap forward.¹

¹ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford*.

83. Dialogue. — One of the means of enlivening the course of a narrative and at the same time, if skillfully employed, of helping forward the movement consists in the use of dialogue. On the principle that impressions received at first hand are always more vivid than those received at second hand, the actual words used by a character in a story will interest the reader more readily than any report of those words which the writer may give. In dialogue the characters are actually placed before the reader. His imagination is thus the better able to make them seem real. Hence it is that dialogue, when skillfully used, tends to give to a narrative an air of lifelikeness and reality.

The novice needs to beware, however, of the temptation to introduce dialogue into his narrative merely for the sake of "making talk." Desultory conversation in a story is wearisome in the extreme. To be good, dialogue must have point; that is, every speech or observation which a character makes must be significant, must serve as a means either of revealing the speaker's own personality or of contributing something to the action of the narrative.

84. The ending. — The way in which a narrative ends is responsible for no small part of its success or failure. As has already been indicated, the end is that point towards which the whole course of the narrative tends and in which it receives completeness and definiteness of form. Beyond this point the reader's interest should never be tempted to go. Not

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 177

only that, but the reader should be made to feel that anything added after the end is once reached is distinctly irrelevant, is matter "belonging to another story," as Mr. Kipling is wont to say. In story-telling to go too far is as bad as not to go far enough. If a story is not complete, it is, of course, unsatisfactory; if it is more than complete, it may be just as unsatisfactory.

Descriptive details, or details that in any way tend to retard the movement of the story, should never be brought in near the end, for, as a rule, the movement should be more rapid towards the end than at any other point. As a general rule, also, the end should have something of the nature of a climax; that is to say, the emphasis should be so distributed that the interest will tend to heighten towards the end and be greatest at or near the conclusion.

EXERCISES

1. Analyze Stevenson's *Will o' the Mill* from the point of view of (a) unity, (b) plot, (c) characterization, (d) setting, (e) diction, (f) the moral.
2. Determine roughly the relative proportions of description and narration in Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*.
3. Show what methods of portraying character Bret Harte uses in *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. The story of my life.
2. A vacation experience.
3. A day's hunting.

4. How I missed "making" the football team.
5. The life history of a "coon."
6. How the fox outwitted the hound.
7. The exploits of Spot.
8. A house party.
9. A bit of local history.
10. How irrigation is reclaiming the desert.
11. My first experience in sailing a boat.
12. The funniest story I ever heard.
13. The story of a newsboy.
14. How a newspaper gets its news.
15. A short story.
16. A battle between ants.
17. My experience as an agent.
18. How I earned my first dollar.
19. How the negative of a photograph is developed.
20. The origin of Thanksgiving.
21. How the Yule feast was celebrated in olden times.
22. The coming of the Pilgrim Fathers.
23. The early French settlements in Illinois.
24. The early life of Alexander Hamilton.
25. A criticism of the plot in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.
26. Wordsworth's shorter narrative poems.

CHAPTER IX

EXPOSITION

85. Definition. — Exposition is that kind of discourse wherein the aim is to make clear the meaning of something. It is, in fact, nothing more nor less than explanation. Whenever we set forth the meaning of a law, principle, or general notion, or show how one thing, or set of things, is related to another, we make use of exposition. Broadly speaking, it is the kind of discourse we use when we wish to communicate knowledge. Its appeal is, accordingly, almost always to the understanding alone.

In general, its method may be illustrated by the following:

There is a general harmony in nature between the colors of an animal and those of its habitation. Arctic animals are white, desert animals are sand-colored; dwellers among leaves and grass are green; nocturnal animals are dusky. These colors are not universal, but are very general, and are seldom reversed. Going on a little further, we find birds, reptiles, and insects, so tinted and mottled as exactly to match the rock, or bark, or leaf, or flower they are accustomed to rest upon — and thereby effectually concealed. Another step in advance, and we have insects which are formed as well as colored so as exactly to resemble particular leaves or sticks, or mossy twigs, or flowers; and in these cases very peculiar habits and instincts come into

play to aid in the deception and render the concealment more complete. We now enter upon a new phase of the phenomena, and come to creatures whose colors neither conceal them nor make them like vegetable or mineral substances; on the contrary, they are conspicuous enough, but they completely resemble some other creature of a quite different group, while they differ much in outward appearance from those with which all essential parts of their organization show them to be really closely allied. They appear like actors or masqueraders dressed up and painted for amusement, or like swindlers endeavoring to pass themselves off for well-known and respectable members of society. What is the meaning of this strange travesty? Does nature descend to imposture or masquerade? We answer, she does not. Her principles are too severe. There is a use in every detail of her handiwork. The resemblance of one animal to another is of exactly the same essential nature as the resemblance to a leaf, or to bark, or to desert sand, and answers exactly the same purpose. In the one case the enemy will not attack the leaf or the bark, and so the disguise is a safeguard; in the other case it is found that for various reasons the creature resembled is passed over, and not attacked by the usual enemies of its order, and thus the creature that resembles it has an equally effectual safeguard. We are plainly shown that the disguise is of the same nature in the two cases, by the occurrence in the same group of one species resembling a vegetable substance, while another resembles a living animal of another group; and we know that the creatures resembled possess an immunity from attack, by their being always very abundant, by their being conspicuous and not concealing themselves, and by their having generally no visible means of escape from their enemies; while, at the same time, the particular quality that makes them disliked is often very clear, such as a nasty taste or an indigestible hardness. Further examination reveals the fact that, in several cases of both kinds of disguise, it is

the female only that is thus disguised; and as it can be shown that the female needs protection much more than the male, and that her preservation for a much longer period is absolutely necessary for the continuation of the race, we have an additional indication that the resemblance is in all cases subservient to a great purpose — the preservation of the species.¹

86. *Relation to other forms of discourse.* — As we have seen, exposition relates itself very closely to certain kinds of description. No hard and fast line, indeed, can be drawn between the two forms. Popular speech, moreover, tends to confuse them. One may “describe” or “explain” the structure of a house, the working of a machine, the plan of a campaign, and so on; and for all practical purposes it matters little whether one chooses to call the result description or exposition. The principles involved in the actual writing are the same in either case. Nevertheless, there is a broad distinction between the two forms. Description deals properly with the individual, the particular; exposition, on the other hand, concerns itself solely with the general.

A like closeness of relation between exposition and argumentation is also to be noted. Exposition, indeed, forms, as it were, the very groundwork of argumentation, for the first step in convincing a man of the truth of a proposition is to make him understand it. Moreover, exposition is often used for an argumentative purpose, as, for instance, when one

¹ A. R. Wallace, *Natural Selection*.

explains a principle or theory with the idea of getting some one else to accept it as a truth. In this case more or less of an argumentative tone will doubtless be given to the explanation so as to make the purpose evident. In fact, one would probably be safe in saying that most argumentative discourses are made up in this way — exposition with a thread of persuasion running through it. Notable examples of such a blending of the two forms are Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Huxley's *Three Lectures on Evolution*.

Pure exposition, however, is dispassionate. There is in it no desire to influence the reader this way or that. Its sole end and aim is to set forth the truth.

87. Kinds of exposition. — In pure exposition the main business of the writer is the determining of the meaning or scope of general ideas or notions. With the peculiarities of individual things, considered as individuals, exposition, as we have seen, has nothing to do; that forms the province of description. Exposition takes account of things only as they are grouped together in virtue of the possession of common attributes or qualities. That is to say, it deals with things brought within the compass of a general notion, — things to which a general term may be applied.

Broadly speaking, the exposition of a general idea may take one or other of two forms, which, from the central purpose in each, we may call exposition by definition and exposition by classification. Thus in expounding the idea of a vertebrate, let us say, a

writer may either try to make clear what a vertebrate essentially is, — that is, what are the characteristics possessed by all vertebrates in common, — or he may try to show how all the individuals to which the term “vertebrate” may be applied may be grouped or arranged in classes so as to bring out their relationship to one another. His exposition in the first place would be definition; in the second place, classification. The two forms are not, of course, always kept distinct; but usually the main purpose of any expository discourse is either definition or classification.

88. Exposition by definition. — Exposition by definition is the determining of the meaning or content of a general idea, the setting forth of the essential characteristics or attributes of the things thought of as included in the idea. Its aim is to bound or limit the idea so that it may become distinct from all other ideas. Hence it should set forth clearly and in detail as many of the distinguishing characteristics of the thing defined as possible.

Note with what elaborate completeness Newman expounds the idea of a gentleman in the following:

Hence it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy-chair or a good fire, which do their part

in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; — all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain, because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved

than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence! he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honors the ministers of religion and it contents him to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilization.

Not that he may not hold a religion too, in his own way, even when he is not a Christian. In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic, and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy. Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And this deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching, that he even seems like a disciple of Christianity itself. From the very accuracy and steadiness of his logical powers, he is able to see what sentiments are consistent in those who hold any religious doctrine at all, and he appears to others to feel and to hold a whole circle of theological truths, which exists in his mind no otherwise than as a number of deductions.¹

¹ From *The Idea of a University*.

The nucleus of an exposition of the kind just cited is the ordinary definition. Such an exposition may be regarded, indeed, simply as an extended or enlarged definition. The importance of the definition in expository composition is therefore obvious. Good definitions are exceedingly rare, and the value of a good definition is not easily over-estimated. The ability to make clear and accurate definitions lies, in fact, at the very root of clear thinking, and is indispensable to the lucid presentation of thought which deals with general notions.

89. Kinds of definitions. — Two kinds of definitions may be distinguished: (*a*) that which we ordinarily find in the dictionaries, and which we may call the loose definition; and (*b*) the more formal and exact kind known as the logical definition.

(*a*) *The loose definition.* — The loose definition, so-called, is the simplest kind of a definition. Ordinarily, it consists merely of a word or phrase synonymous, or nearly so, with the term to be defined. A king, for example, may be defined as "a chief ruler, a reigning sovereign or monarch." Such a definition does not pretend to be a full and exact account of the content of the idea for which the term stands. It marks out approximately, rather than exactly, the boundaries of the idea. Nevertheless, the loose definition is an exceedingly useful kind of definition, in spite of its inexactness. It is usually very concise, and that makes it convenient for practical use.

(b) *The logical definition.* — The logical definition differs from the loose definition merely in being more formal and exact. It does not, any more than the loose definition, pretend to be a full and detailed account of the content of an idea. On the contrary, it gives in detail, usually, but one or two characteristics of the thing to be defined, supplying the place of those omitted by means of another general term. That is, it takes the term to be defined, regards it as representing a species, refers that species to a genus, or higher class, and indicates the characteristic or characteristics which differentiate the species from the genus.

The essential parts of a logical definition are, thus, the *genus* and the *differentia*. The following examples will illustrate the form in which it usually occurs:

TERM TO BE DEFINED (SPECIES)		GENUS	DIFFERENTIA
Science	is	knowledge	systematized.
Man	is	an animal	capable of reasoning.
A paragraph	is	{ a unit of discourse	{ developing a single topic.
A genus	is	a class	{ divisible into smaller classes or species.
Rhetoric	is	the art	{ which deals with the effective communica- tion of thought and emotion by means of words.

90. Requisites of a good definition. — In the first place, a definition, to be valid, must avoid the use of any term containing the term to be defined or any term derived from the same root. Trying to define a term by means of virtually the same term would be like traveling in a circle; no advance would be made. Thus, to define "freedom" as "the ability to act freely," would be inadmissible.

In the next place, a definition should be accurate. Its value, in fact, depends upon its accuracy, upon the distinctness with which the thing defined is separated from all other things. In the case of the loose definition, as we have seen, accuracy can be attained only approximately. In the logical definition, however, we can have almost as great a degree of precision as we please. It is mainly a question of differentia. This must always be a characteristic possessed by the thing defined but by no other things included in the genus. Thus the definition of a bird as "an animal capable of flying" would be worthless because, in the first place, not all birds are capable of flying, and, in the second place, other animals than birds — bats, for instance — are capable of flying. The differentia here is not an unfailing mark of distinction, and is therefore valueless. A logical definition admits of no exceptions; it must be true universally, or it is worthless.

It should be noted that accuracy of definition does not necessarily imply that the differentia must be full and precise as to the characteristics which distinguish

the thing defined from the genus. A definition in logical form may lack this fullness and precision and yet be highly useful — more useful, in fact, than the fuller, more precise one, because more concise. For example, the definition of man as “an animal capable of reasoning” is not precise, because the differentia, “capable of reasoning,” does not exhaust the characteristics distinguishing man from other animals; yet it is a perfectly valid definition for all that. It is accurate as far as it goes, and, for certain purposes, just as useful as if the differentia were full and precise. It is thus often possible, especially in popular exposition, where absolute exactness is seldom an essential point, for a writer to have a good deal of freedom with regard to the choice of differentia for his definition. In making this choice he should always keep in mind the purpose for which he is going to use his definition. “Man is a reasoning animal” might be a perfectly good definition for one purpose; but for another, “man is a worshiping animal” might be better. Neither of these definitions, however, would be of much service to the zoölogist, who would want to have all the important characteristics which distinguish man from the other animals of his class and order carefully indicated.

Lastly, a good definition should be expressed in simple and concise terms. Other things being equal, the simpler and more concise a definition is the better. No degree of simplicity, to be sure, will make up for a lack of accuracy, for accuracy is the first essential,

particularly in a logical definition; but simplicity and conciseness count for a great deal, especially in a definition intended for popular use. The absurdity of trying to define a familiar thing by means of learned and unfamiliar terms is well illustrated by Dr. Johnson's famous definition of "network" as "anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with intersections between the interstices."

91. Methods of exposition by definition. — The nucleus of an expository composition of the defining kind is, as we have seen, nothing more nor less than the ordinary definition. This, however, is too compact, too concentrated a form to take the place of the fuller presentation of the content of an idea which the discourse affords. To be able to grasp the full meaning of an idea, the reader must have a thorough analysis of what it contains. This means a presentation of its main points from as many different sides as possible.

Hence one of the most common methods of setting forth the content of an idea is by expanding or enlarging upon the ordinary definition. By iteration, or repetition with more or less variation of terms, the definition is made to yield up its whole meaning, to reveal what it implies as well as what it explicitly expresses. The following will illustrate the method:

If I were asked to describe as briefly and popularly as I could, what a University was, I should draw my answer from its ancient designation of a Studium Generale, or "School of Universal Learning." This description implies the assem-

blage of strangers from all parts in one spot; — *from all parts*; else, how will you find professors and students for every department of knowledge? and *in one spot*; else, how can there be any school at all? Accordingly, in its simple and rudimental form, it is a school of knowledge of every kind, consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter. Many things are requisite to complete and satisfy the idea embodied in this description ; but such as this a University seems to be in its essence, a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country.

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But I have said more than enough in illustration; I end as I began; — a University is a place of concourse, whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge. You cannot have the best of every kind everywhere; you must go to some great city or emporium for it. There you have all the choicest productions of nature and art all together, which you find each in its own separate place elsewhere. All the riches of the land, and of the earth, are carried up thither, there are the best markets, and there the best workmen. It is the center of trade, the supreme court of fashion, the umpire of rival talents, and the standard of things rare and precious. It is the place for seeing galleries of first-rate pictures, and for hearing wonderful voices and performers of transcendent skill. It is the place for great preachers, great orators, great nobles, great statesmen. In the nature of things, greatness and unity go together; excellence implies a center. And such, for the third or fourth time, is a University; I hope I do not weary out the reader by repeating it. It is the place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered

innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers. It is the place where the catechist makes good his ground as he goes, treading in the truth day by day into the ready memory, and wedging and tightening it into the expanding reason. It is a place which wins the admiration of the young by its celebrity, kindles the affections of the middle-aged by its beauty, and rivets the fidelity of the old by its associations. It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an Alma Mater of the rising generation. It is this and a great deal more, and demands a somewhat better head and hand than mine to describe it well.¹

Another effective method of elucidation is by means of comparison or contrast. The meaning of an idea may be made clear not only by showing what the idea contains, but what it does not contain, or wherein it differs from a like idea. In the following passage, for instance, the writer wishes to explain the attitude of the Japanese towards their ancestors, and in so doing compares and contrasts their filial piety with that of the Greeks and Romans:

Probably the filial piety that centered about the domestic altars of the ancient West differed in little from that which yet rules the most eastern East. But we miss in Japan the Aryan hearth, the family altar with its perpetual fire. The

¹ Newman's "What is a University"; see his *Historical Sketches*, Vol. III, chapter ii.

Japanese home-religion represents, apparently, a much earlier stage of the cult than that which existed within historic time among the Greeks and Romans. The homestead in Old Japan was not a stable institution like the Greek or the Roman home; the custom of burying the family dead upon the family estate never became general; the dwelling itself never assumed a substantial and lasting character. It could not be literally said of the Japanese warrior, as of the Roman, that he fought *pro aris et focis*. There was neither altar nor sacred fire: the place of these was taken by the spirit-shelf or shrine, with its tiny lamp, kindled afresh each evening; and, in early times, there were no Japanese images of divinities. For Lares and Penates there were only the mortuary tablets of the ancestors, and certain little tablets bearing names of other gods — tutelary gods. The presence of these frail wooden objects still makes the home; and they may be, of course, transported anywhere.

To apprehend the full meaning of ancestor-worship as a family religion, a living faith, is now difficult for the Western mind. We are able to imagine only in the vaguest way how our Aryan forefathers felt and thought about their dead. But in the living beliefs of Japan we find much to suggest the nature of the old Greek piety. Each member of the family supposes himself, or herself, under a perpetual ghostly surveillance. Spirit-eyes are watching every act; spirit-ears are listening to every word. Thoughts too, not less than deeds, are visible to the gaze of the dead: the heart must be pure, the mind must be under control, within the presence of the spirits. Probably the influence of such beliefs, uninterruptedly exerted upon conduct during thousands of years, did much to form the charming side of Japanese character. Yet there is nothing stern or solemn in this home-religion to-day, — nothing of that rigid and unvarying discipline supposed by Fustel de Coulanges to have especially characterized the Roman cult. It is a religion rather of gratitude and

tenderness; the dead being served by the household as if they were actually present in the body. I fancy that if we were able to enter for a moment into the vanished life of some old Greek city, we should find the domestic religion there not less cheerful than the Japanese home-cult remains to-day. I imagine that Greek children, three thousand years ago, must have watched, like the Japanese children of to-day, for a chance to steal some of the good things offered to the ghosts of the ancestors; and I fancy that Greek parents must have chidden quite as gently as Japanese parents chide in this era of Meiji, — mingling reproof with instruction, and hinting of weird possibilities.¹

92. Exposition by classification. — “By the classification of any series of objects,” says Huxley, “is meant the actual, or ideal, arrangement together of those which are like and the separation of those which are unlike; the purpose of this arrangement being to facilitate the operations of the mind in clearly conceiving and retaining in the memory the characters of the objects in question.”² The process is an important one in the acquisition and communication of knowledge. Things are too multitudinous to be dealt with singly, even for the most capacious intellects. Before they can be of much service to us as objects of knowledge, they must be arranged in groups or classes according to their various degrees of relationship. Classifying things saves us an immense amount of energy; and, as a general rule, the more we classify the more exact and communicable becomes our knowledge.

¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Interpretation*, pp. 58–60.

² *Introduction to the Classification of Animals*, chapter i.

In its broadest sense, classification may be regarded as including both generalization and division.

93. Generalization. — Generalization may be described as a sort of unifying process. We generalize when we bring like things together and make of them a class by themselves. We generalize, for instance, when, after observing that certain kinds of plants resemble one another very much in certain particulars, we put these kinds together in one group and give that group a name. We generalize, also, when we try to explain the meaning of a number of phenomena by bringing them under the operation of some one law or principle. The process is the exact opposite of that of definition.

In its freer and more literary form, generalization may be fairly well illustrated by the following passage from the conclusion of Hamerton's essay "On the Difficulty of Discovering Fixed Laws":

The only approximation to a general law that I would venture to affirm is that the strongest reason why men are drawn together is not identity of class, not identity of race, not a common interest in any particular art or science, but because there is something in their idiosyncrasies that gives a charm to intercourse between the two. What it is I cannot tell, and I have never met with the wise man who was able to enlighten me.

It is not respect for character, seeing that we often respect people heartily without being able to enjoy their society. It is a mysterious suitableness or adaptability, and *how* mysterious it is may be in some degree realized when we reflect that we cannot account for our own preferences. I try to explain to

myself, for my own intellectual satisfaction, how and why it is that I take pleasure in the society of one very dear friend. He is a most able, honorable, and high-minded man, but others are all that, and they give me no pleasure. My friend and I have really not very much in common, far less than I have with some perfectly indifferent people. I only know that we are always glad to be together, that each of us likes to listen to the other, and that we have talked for innumerable hours. Neither does my affection blind me to his faults. I see them as clearly as if I were his enemy, and doubt not that he sees mine. There is no illusion, and there has been no change in our sentiments for twenty years.

As a contrast to this instance I think of others in which everything seems to have been prepared on purpose for facility of intercourse, in which there is similarity of pursuits, of language, of education, of everything that is likely to permit men to talk easily together, and yet there is some obstacle that makes any real intercourse impossible. What the obstacle is I am unable to explain even to myself. It need not be any unkind feeling, nor any feeling of disapprobation; there may be good-will on both sides and a mutual desire for a greater degree of intimacy, yet with all this the intimacy does not come, and such intercourse as we have is that of simple politeness. In these cases each party is apt to think that the other is reserved, when there is no wish to be reserved, but rather a desire to be as open as the unseen obstacle will allow. The existence of the obstacle does not prevent respect and esteem or even a considerable degree of affection. It divides people who seem to be on the most friendly terms; it divides even the nearest relations, brother from brother, and the son from the father. Nobody knows exactly what it is, but we have a word for it, we call it incompatibility. The difficulty of going farther and explaining the real nature of incompatibility is that it takes as many shapes as there are varieties in the characters of mankind.

Sympathy and incompatibility, — these are the two great powers that decide for us whether intercourse is to be possible or not, but the causes of them are dark mysteries that lie undiscovered far down in the “abysmal deeps of personality.”¹

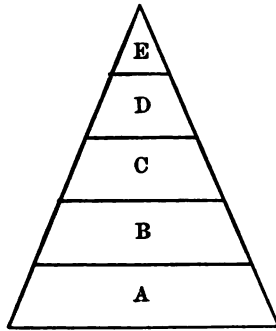
94. Division. — Division, or classification in its narrowest sense, means the breaking up of a genus into its constituent species. From the point of view of rhetoric, however, classification means much more than mere logical division, which is content with simply stating exactly the species or sub-classes which together comprise the genus or class divided. Its object is not so much to give an exact enumeration of these species as to enable the writer to take a comprehensive and systematic survey of them. Its aim is to give grasp, breadth of view, power over the subject treated. Hence it takes into account the purpose the writer had in mind in making the classification, and allows him to adapt it to that purpose.

A classification such as that contained in the following passage, for example, has little of the exactness which a strictly logical division would demand; yet for the purpose the writer had in view, it is a highly useful classification:

The human element in production, whether in the work of guidance or in obedience, varies as widely as human nature and capacity. *Tot homines, tot capacitates*. For services to production, laborers may be roughly classified by strata, as in the accompanying diagram:

¹ *Human Intercourse*, chapter i.

The unskilled men in *A*, the slightly skilled in *B*, the highly skilled artisans in *C* (such as the locomotive engineers), the highly educated professional men in *D* (such as civil engineers, electrical experts, and the like), and finally the



exceptionally capable managers in *E*. In any one industry some of each kind are required, but not with the same intensity of demand; nor are they wanted in the same relative numbers in different industries.

The unskilled man in *A* has no choice of occupations that he can enter; he can do only the work demanded of his class. And yet, as compared with the demand for them, the number in this strata¹ is enormously large. Moreover, in the *A* class there is the least capacity to set the future gain above the present indulgence. Thus we find increasing numbers in the very group whose activity is restricted to a given kind of work. Among those least competent to add to production, there is the greatest supply relatively to the demand for them. Their share is small, not only because their industrial efficiency is small, but because the supply of them is excessive.

As we go up in the scale of industrial efficiency, we find the numbers in the strata of the more highly skilled diminishing, while the intensity of the demand for them increases. Hence wages increase the higher we go. In the top strata, containing the most efficient managers, we find the highest wages paid throughout the whole industrial field. When a blundering or incompetent manager costs a company millions in losses, a fifty-thousand-dollar man, who adds millions in gains, is a cheap laborer. In this struggle up the scale from

¹ Query: Is *strata* recognized as a singular?

A to *E* we find the real social conflict. It is a contest between different kinds of laborers, — a contest of varying grades of industrial capacity with each other. It is a free-to-all race, in which the most competent win. The great industrial manager, being the most highly skilled laborer, obtains enormous wages for exceptional services to production. This exposition gives us, in brief, the economic reason why, in a country of phenomenal resources like the United States, men of exceptional industrial ability can acquire exceptionally large fortunes legitimately.¹

95. Requisites of a good classification. — While rhetorical classification does not usually make any pretense at the exactness of logical division, it may not therefore neglect all the rules of logic. On the contrary, if it is to have any practical value, it must conform to certain well-established principles.

In the first place, the basis upon which the classification is made must remain unchanged throughout, otherwise, confusion is inevitable. It must be remembered that most things may be classified in a variety of ways — in as many ways, in fact, as they have relations to one another, or as the mind is capable of regarding them. Thus, for instance, buildings may be classified, according to the material out of which they are constructed, as wooden, brick, stone, iron, and the like; or, according to the purpose for which they are intended, as dwelling-houses, warehouses, shops, museums, churches, and so on; or, again, according to their style of architecture, as

¹ J. Lawrence Laughlin, *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1905, p. 42.

Greek, Roman, Gothic, modern, and so on. Each classification here is based on some one distinct principle, and this unity of basic principle renders possible the attainment of the main end of the classification, namely, the comprehensive survey of the subject from some particular point of view. If one were to classify buildings loosely, however, as dwelling-houses, warehouses, brick houses, churches, and so on, this end could not be attained, because the point of view could not remain the same. One could never be sure, in this case, where to put any particular building. It would be like filing letters at haphazard, now according to the writers' names and again according to subject-matter — a method obviously not to be recommended on the score of convenience.

The chief virtue of a good classification being that no individual of the class divided can be put in more than one division, it follows, also, that the divisions must be mutually exclusive. No one division must include any other division, either in whole or in part, otherwise the value of the classification will be destroyed. Thus, if we were to classify literature as history, biography, fiction, poetry, and prose, the classification would be open to the objection that fiction might include poetry as well as part of prose, and that prose would include practically all of both history and biography.

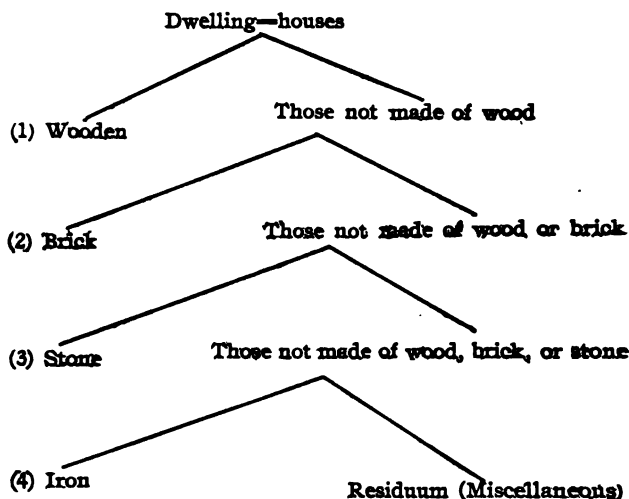
Again, a classification, to have its highest value, should be exhaustive; that is, all the divisions taken together should equal the class divided. Thus, if

we were to classify houses, for example, according to the material out of which they are constructed, as wooden, brick, and stone houses, the classification would be open to the objection that it did not include all houses: in some places houses are built mainly of iron; in others, of clay or earth.

This rule, it is to be observed, however, is imperative only in cases where exactness and precision are of first importance. In ordinary literary exposition it is seldom insisted on. A classification may have great practical value even if it is not exhaustive. In fact, no classification can be held to be absolutely exhaustive, logically speaking, except the so-called bifurcate classification, where there are but two divisions, one of which is expressly stated to contain all of the class not contained in the other. For example, the citizens of the United States may be classed as those who have the right to vote, and those who have not that right. The classification is absolutely exhaustive, since it is not possible that there are citizens of the United States not included in either of these classes or divisions.

From the fact that one of the divisions in the bifurcate method of classification must always be distinguished by negative characteristics, that method is of little practical value. It is useful mainly as a means of testing other methods of classification, or as a means of arriving, through a process of continued subdivision, at a classification that will have practical value as well as the merit of exhaustiveness.

Thus, to find a logically complete classification of dwelling-houses, we might proceed, using material as the basis of the classification, as follows:



By keeping up this process of subdivision, we can make the residuum or miscellaneous division as small as we please, — so small, in fact, as to become practically a negligible quantity. Absolute exhaustiveness will not be secured, however, unless we retain the residuum as a division by itself.

96. Partition. — Somewhat similar to classification yet quite distinct from it in purpose, is what is commonly known as partition, or the division of a subject into its component parts. In partition, there is no question of kinds or classes, the object being, merely,

such a division of the subject as will best suit the convenience of the writer. A partition should not, of course, be purely arbitrary, but it may be made almost as elastic as the writer chooses.

Huxley's division of his subject in his lecture, "On the Study of Biology," for instance, is an example of partition. "I shall, therefore, address myself to the endeavor," he says to his audience, "to give you some answer to these four questions — what biology is; why it should be studied; how it should be studied; and when it should be studied." Convenience and system in the treatment of his subject, rather than the setting forth of the relation of kinds or classes to one another, is obviously the main aim of the lecturer in making such a division as this.

97. Necessity of clearness in exposition. — In no other kind of discourse, perhaps, is the need of clearness so great as in exposition. The aim in exposition being elucidation, all the means at the writer's command for making the meaning clear should be used. To this end, the writer should see that his material is thoroughly unified, that his arrangement of that material is clear and logical, and that the terms he uses are as simple and as definite as he can make them.

EXERCISES

1. Comment upon the following definitions:
 - a. Capital is the accumulated stock of human labor.
 - b. Education is training for complete living.
 - c. Education is training for social efficiency.

- d.* Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life.
- e.* Lyric poetry is the expression of the personal feelings of the poet translated into rhythms analogous to the nature of his emotions.
- f.* Tin is a metal lighter than gold.
- g.* Logic is the art of reasoning.
- h.* Cheese is a caseous preparation of milk.
- i.* A state is an ethnic unit which lies within a geographical unit.
- 2. Wherein, if at all, are the following classifications faulty?
 - a.* Students may be divided naturally into three groups, — the athletic, the idle, and the industrious.
 - b.* The chief poetic forms are the epic, the narrative poem, the lyric, the elegy, the ode, and the sonnet.
 - c.* Education: primary, secondary, collegiate, technical, scientific, and professional.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

- 1. What a college literary society does for its members.
- 2. What constitutes success in life?
- 3. The secret of popularity.
- 4. The tyranny of fashion.
- 5. Does the right always triumph in the end?
- 6. What makes a gentleman?
- 7. The modern scientific spirit.
- 8. Patriotism.
- 9. The function of the newspaper.
- 10. The distinction between nature and art.
- 11. The distinction between the lyric and the reflective poem.
- 12. The distinction between character and reputation.
- 13. What makes a nation great?
- 14. The value of cheerfulness.

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 205

15. My intended profession and why I have chosen it.
16. The disadvantages of having to work one's way through college.
17. Household science as a college study.
18. The qualifications of a good engineer.
19. How to make a casting.
20. Reinforced concrete.
21. Methods of maintaining soil fertility.
22. The value of tree-planting on the prairies.
23. How to test seed corn.
24. The advantages of mixed farming.
25. Intensive versus extensive farming.
26. What it costs to grow a bushel of corn.
27. Curing a cheese.
28. How a railroad is managed.
29. How artificial ice is made.
30. The best method of sewage disposal.
31. The steam turbine.
32. The development of electric interurban railways.
33. Recent improvements in automobiles.
34. The value of lightning rods.
35. The development of wireless telegraphy.
36. The weakness of the feudal system.
37. The influence of sea power.
38. The sources of England's greatness.
39. The cause of the downfall of Spain.
40. Fighting pests with insect allies. (See *Little Masterpieces of Science*, p. 123.)
41. Protective coloring among animals. (See *Natural Selection*, by A. R. Wallace, or *The Colours of Animals*, by E. B. Poulton.)
42. The aim of culture. (See the chapter on "Sweetness and Light" in Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.)

CHAPTER X

ARGUMENTATION

98. Definition. — Argumentation may be defined as that kind of discourse wherein the aim is to win assent, or, in other words, to induce belief in the truth of a proposition. In argumentation the writer assumes that there may be difference of opinion between the reader and himself with regard to the subject discussed, and his object is to remove that difference by bringing the reader over to his way of thinking.

99. Difference between argumentation and exposition. — It is the presupposition that there may be difference of opinion on the subject discussed that distinguishes, in the main, argumentation from exposition. In exposition the presumption is that the reader is at one with the writer in desiring simply a clear understanding of the subject. When he understands fully and clearly what the writer is trying to make him understand, all has been done that needs to be done. Whether he believes it to be true or false is immaterial; it is sufficient if he simply understands it. In argumentation, however, it is different. Here it is the reader's beliefs or opinions with regard to a subject, not his understanding of it merely, that the writer is concerned with chiefly. Explanation may, of course, play an important part in an argumentative discourse;

but it is always a part subservient to the main purpose of the discourse, which is the influencing of the belief or opinions of the reader.

In the following passage from Darwin's *Origin of Species*, for example, note how strongly this purpose comes out:

The complex and little known laws governing the production of varieties are the same, as far as we can judge, with the laws which have governed the production of distinct species. In both cases physical conditions seem to have produced some direct and definite effect, but how much we cannot say. Thus, when varieties enter any new station, they occasionally assume some of the characters proper to the species of that station. With both varieties and species, use and disuse seem to have produced a considerable effect; for it is impossible to resist this conclusion when we look, for instance, at the logger-headed duck, which has wings incapable of flight, in nearly the same condition as in the domestic duck; or when we look at the burrowing tucu-tucu, which is occasionally blind, and then at certain moles, which are habitually blind and have their eyes covered with skin; or when we look at the blind animals inhabiting the dark caves of America and Europe. With varieties and species, correlated variation seems to have played an important part, so that when one part has been modified other parts have been necessarily modified. With both varieties and species, reversion to long-lost characters occasionally occurs. How inexplicable on the theory of creation is the occasional appearance of stripes on the shoulders and legs of the several species of the horse-genus and of their hybrids! How simply is this fact explained if we believe that these species are all descended from a striped progenitor, in the same manner as the several domestic breeds of the pigeons are descended from the blue and barred rock pigeon!

100. **Ways in which belief may be induced.** — Belief in the truth of a proposition may be induced either by the method of persuasion, that is by appealing to the will or the feelings, or by the method of conviction, that is by appealing to the understanding. It is only in the realms of pure science, however, that we attempt to reason dispassionately. Whenever we approach life or the questions which concern life, we put more or less feeling into our discourse. In literature there is, virtually, no such thing as pure argumentation; persuasion enters, to some degree at least, into practically all argumentative discourses of the ordinary or literary kind, — the kind, that is, with which we are here concerned. On the other hand, pure persuasion is as rare as pure argumentation. Persuasion must have a substratum of reasoning before it can be widely effective. We may move for the moment by an appeal to the passions or prejudices of our readers, but the effect will not be very lasting if there is no solid, logical basis to our argument. We may, as modern psychology hints, be very much less subject to the sway of reason than we suppose; but we are so constituted that we expect to have our understanding convinced before we yield assent.

Most argumentative discourses, then, are a mixture of reasoning and persuasion. They accomplish their end partly by conviction and partly by persuasion, aiming always at a happy combination of the two methods. The two methods, in fact, are complementary, and ideal argumentation would, as Pro-

fessor Baker puts it, "combine perfection of reasoning, complete convincingness, with perfection of persuasive power — excitement of just the right emotions to just the right extent to obtain the ends desired by the speaker or writer."¹

101. Persuasion. — For the most part, the arts of persuasion are beyond the power of the rhetorician to teach. There is, as yet, neither a science nor an art of persuasion. Such persuasive arts and devices as are recognized and practiced depend for their efficacy mostly upon the personal gifts of those who use them. What is called "personal magnetism" will, in the case of one speaker, render effective what would, in the case of another, be a totally ineffective argument. In written discourse, to be sure, the personal magnetism which a speaker may exert does not count; nevertheless, there may still be an individuality in a writer's style whereby what he says may be able to win its way to the hearts of his readers, though the same arguments, differently expressed, would fall flat.

In general, the great thing in persuasion is the winning of the sympathy of the reader. The reader must be made to feel with the writer, to be willing not only to hear what he has to say, but to follow him in a spirit of open-mindedness, or readiness to be persuaded. This means that the writer himself must be fair-minded, earnest, and sincere. Nothing will more quickly breed distrust in the reader, and hence render

¹ *Principles of Argumentation*, p. 7.

the task of winning assent from him difficult, if not impossible, than an appearance of unfairness or insincerity on the part of the writer. The reader cannot be made to believe what the writer himself does not believe. Nor can he be made to feel much enthusiasm about a subject if the writer displays no such feeling on his own part. The reader, in short, takes his cue from the writer. The argumentative writer who would succeed, therefore, should first try to get his readers into as favorable an attitude toward him as possible, then throw himself into his subject with as much vigor as he can. The rest will depend upon the cogency of his reasoning.

102. Conviction. — In studying the methods of convincing the understanding, we are on much firmer ground than when dealing with persuasion. Logic, which is the science that treats of the nature and laws of thought, has investigated the process of thinking and has laid down the general conditions under which reasoning must proceed in order to be correct. We can call logic to our aid here, therefore, whereas in persuasion we have no such guide to fall back upon.

103. The proposition. — The first point to note is that every argumentation implies a proposition. In arguing, we affirm or deny that something is true and then proceed to give reasons why it should or should not be regarded as true. In other words, we lay down a "proposition" and then "prove" it by adducing arguments in support of it. We cannot "argue a term"; we must have an assertion with re-

gard to it before we can bring it within the scope of argumentation.

The point is well illustrated by the comment which Newman makes upon the composition of a certain student whose father had submitted it to him for criticism:

The subject is "Fortes fortuna adjuvat"; now this is a proposition; it states a certain general principle, and this is just what an ordinary boy would be sure to miss, and Robert¹ does miss it. He goes off at once on the word "fortuna." "Fortuna" was not his subject; the thesis was intended to guide him for his own good; he refuses to be put into leading strings; he breaks loose, and runs off in his own fashion on the broad field and in wild chase of "fortuna," instead of closing with a subject, which, as being definite, would have supported him.

It would have been very cruel to have told a boy to write on "fortuna"; it would have been like asking him his opinion of things in general. Fortune is good, bad, capricious, unexpected, ten thousand things all at once . . . and one of them as much as the other. Ten thousand things may be said of it; give me one of them, and I will write upon it; I cannot write on more than one.²

Logically considered, a proposition consists of two terms joined together by means of some part of the verb to be, which is thus called the copula. Not all propositions, of course, are so simply stated as to be readily reducible into subject, copula, and predicate. They may, however, be so stated. For example,

¹ The writer of the essay.

² *The Idea of a University.*

the proposition "To withdraw from the Philippine Islands at once *is* the duty of the United States," is the exact equivalent of the proposition, "The United States ought to withdraw from the Philippine Islands at once."

104. Importance of making clear the point at issue. — Not only must every argumentation have its proposition, but that proposition should be made clear and definite to the reader. If there is any doubt as to the precise point or points at issue, any ambiguity in the terms of the proposition, that doubt should be cleared away in the beginning and the terms used in the proposition defined as accurately and as carefully as possible. The importance of this preliminary explanation is obvious. In argumentation there must always be a certain common ground upon which both writer and reader may meet and agree, and from which they may proceed to the point in dispute. The larger the area of this common ground, the less, naturally, will be the distance to travel over debatable ground. A little explanation will often save a great deal of argument. In many cases, indeed, it may render argument almost, if not quite, superfluous. Especially is this true where what is called the "presumption" is strongly in favor of the writer, — that is, where the reader, owing to his natural inclinations or prejudices, would be much more likely to agree with him than not.

105. Methods of reasoning. — Reasoning, or the attempt to convince the understanding, consists essen-

tially in making inferences, — that is, in pointing out a necessary connection between a new truth, or truth to be established, and some truth or fact already known and admitted. Inferences may be made in two ways: from the general to the particular, or from the particular to the general. The first is called deductive, the second, inductive reasoning. Thus, if I argue that *A* will try to pay his just debts because he is an honest man, I am assuming as a general truth that all honest men try to pay their just debts, and from that am inferring the particular truth I wish to establish. My reasoning in this case is said to be deductive. On the other hand, if from my observation of honest men I find that they invariably try to pay their just debts, and come to the conclusion that all honest men try to pay their just debts, I am inferring a general truth from a number of particular truths. In this case, my reasoning is said to be inductive.

We have thus two methods of reasoning, the deductive and the inductive, and each is the exact opposite of the other. They are by no means independent of each other, however. Rather, each is the complement of the other. A deduction implies a general truth to start with, and a general truth is the result of an inductive process of reasoning; moreover, induction must, at a certain stage of its progress, adopt the deductive method before it can finally establish its conclusion.

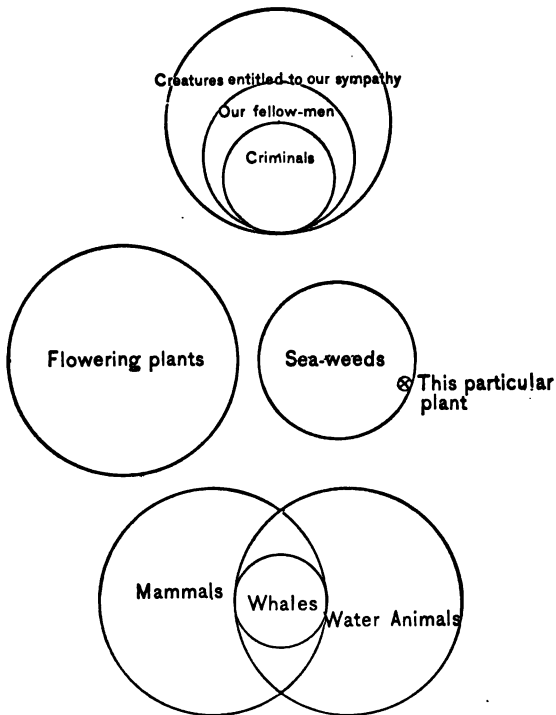
106. Deductive reasoning. — The basis of a deductive argumentation is the syllogism. This consists of a set of three propositions, two of which, called the major and minor premises, are joined together in such a way as to admit of the third, called the conclusion, being derived from them.

For example:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| (1) All our fellow-men are entitled to | |
| our sympathy | Major premise |
| Criminals are our fellow-men . . . | Minor premise |
| Therefore criminals are entitled to | |
| our sympathy | Conclusion |
| | |
| (2) Seaweeds are not flowering plants . | Major premise |
| This is a seaweed | Minor premise |
| Therefore this is not a flowering | |
| plant | Conclusion |
| | |
| (3) All whales are mammals | Major premise |
| All whales are water animals . . . | Minor premise |
| Therefore some water animals are | |
| mammals | Conclusion |

It will be observed that in each of these syllogisms the two premises together contain but three terms, — one term being common to the two, — and that of these three terms, two appear again in the conclusion. Thus the conclusion has nothing in it that is not derived from the premises; and if the premises be admitted as true, there is no escape from accepting the conclusion as true also. If we represent the

sylogisms graphically by means of circles, we can see at a glance how the conclusions must follow:



It must not be supposed that in actual discourse we ordinarily find syllogisms fully expressed, as in the examples given above. As a matter of fact, we seldom find them so expressed. The writer who would stop to make all the minute steps of his reasoning so definite and explicit as that would be considered formal

and pedantic. Reasoning by means of the regular syllogism is the exception rather than the rule. It is the enthymeme or incomplete syllogism that is ordinarily employed; for one or other of the premises is usually a truth so obvious as not to need explicit statement.

The following enthymemes or incomplete syllogisms will serve as illustrations of the ordinary method of making inferences deductively:

We shall die, for all men are mortal.

Brought up among savages, he could not be expected to know the usages of polite society.

He is an oriental, and therefore cannot appreciate the western point of view.

Plagues and convulsions of nature cannot be interpreted as manifestation of God's anger against the wicked, for they involve the innocent as well as the guilty.

In each of these examples one of the premises is suppressed, it being so obvious that the reader is supposed to supply it for himself. Occasionally, even the conclusion may be omitted, as, for example, in the following:

Every man who voted for that measure is a traitor to his country; and we have the honorable gentleman's own word for it that he cast his vote in its favor.

The beginner needs to be cautioned here, perhaps, against the danger of omitting too much, of taking too much for granted. That which appears perfectly obvious to him may not appear obvious at all

to his readers. Before making any assumptions, therefore, he should examine his premises carefully. Whatever can safely be taken for granted should, of course, be assumed. Whatever is doubtful or apt to be misunderstood, however, should be explained and, if necessary, supported by arguments. It is in this elucidation and establishment of his premises, in fact, that the main work of the argumentative writer lies. Where the premises are universally accepted and the inference is plain, there is little or no need for argument. Argument becomes necessary only where one or other of the premises needs explanation and support.

A passage from Webster's argument in the Dartmouth College case, for example, will illustrate the point. One of the main propositions which Webster sought to establish in this celebrated case was that certain acts of the New Hampshire legislature in amending the charter of Dartmouth College without the consent of the trustees were repugnant to the Constitution of the United States. Briefly outlined, his argument takes the form of the following syllogism:

The Constitution of the United States says that no State shall pass a law impairing the obligation of a contract.

But a charter to a private corporation, such as a college, is essentially a contract.

Therefore the acts of the New Hampshire legislature in question amending the charter of Dartmouth College without the consent of the trustees are repugnant to the Constitution of the United States.

Here the major premise is a clause of the Constitution of the United States, which, of course, is accepted without question. But the minor premise, — that is, that a charter is essentially a contract, — is not so clear. This premise, therefore, Webster has to establish. In fact, the greater part of his speech is taken up with the establishing of this premise. Slightly condensed, his argument runs as follows:

The plaintiffs contend, in the second place, that the acts in question are repugnant to the tenth section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States. The material words of that section are: "No State shall pass any bill of attainder, *ex post facto* law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts."

It has already been decided in this court, that a grant is a contract, within the meaning of this provision; and that a grant by a State is also a contract, as much as the grant of an individual. In the case of *Fletcher v. Peck* this court says: "A contract is a compact between two or more parties, and is either executory or executed. An executory contract is one in which a party binds himself to do, or not to do, a particular thing; such was the law under which the conveyance was made by the government. A contract executed is one in which the object of contract is performed; and this, says Blackstone, differs in nothing from a grant. The contract between Georgia and the purchasers was executed by the grant. A contract executed, as well as one which is executory, contains obligations binding on the parties. A grant, in its own nature, amounts to an extinguishment of the right of the grantor, and implies a contract not to re-assert that right. If, under a fair construction of the Constitution, grants are comprehended under the term contracts, is a grant from

the State excluded from the operation of the provision? Is the clause to be considered as inhibiting the State from impairing the obligation of contracts between two individuals, but as excluding from that inhibition contracts made with itself? The words themselves contain no such distinction. They are general and are applicable to contracts of every description. . . .

It has also been decided, that a grant by a State before the Revolution is as much to be protected as a grant since. But the case of *Terret v. Taylor*, before cited, is of all others most pertinent to the present argument. Indeed, the judgment of the court in that case seems to leave little to be argued or decided in this. "A private corporation," says the court, "created by the legislature, may lose its franchises by a *misuser* or *nonuser* of them; and they may be resumed by the government under a judicial judgment upon a *quo warranto* to ascertain and enforce the forfeiture. This is the common law of the land, and is the tacit condition annexed to the creation of every such corporation. . . . But that the legislature can repeal statutes creating private corporations or confirming to them property already acquired under the faith of previous laws, and by such repeal can vest the property of such corporations exclusively in the State, or dispose of the same to such purposes as they please, without the consent or default of the corporators, we are not prepared to admit; and we think ourselves standing upon the principles of natural justice, upon the fundamental laws of every free government, upon the spirit and letter of the Constitution of the United States, and upon the decisions of most respectable judicial tribunals, in resisting such a doctrine."

This court, then, does not admit the doctrine, that a legislature can repeal statutes creating private corporations. If it cannot repeal them altogether, of course it cannot repeal any part of them, or impair them, or essentially alter them, without the consent of the corporators. If, therefore, it has

been shown that this college is to be regarded as a private charity, this case is embraced within the very terms of that decision. A grant of corporate powers and privileges is as much a contract as a grant of land. What proves all charters of this sort to be contracts is, that they must be accepted to give them force and effect. If they are not accepted, they are void. And in the case of an existing corporation, if a new charter is given it, it may even accept part and reject the rest.

There are, in this case, all the essential constituent parts of a contract. There is something to be contracted about, there are parties, and there are plain terms in which the agreement of the parties on the subject of the contract is expressed. There are mutual considerations and inducements. The charter recites, that the founder, on his part, has agreed to establish his seminary in New Hampshire, and to enlarge it beyond its original design, among other things, for the benefit of that Province; and there upon a charter is given to him and his associates, designated by himself, promising and assuring to them, under the plighted faith of the State, the right of governing the college and administering its concerns in the manner provided in the charter. There is a complete and perfect grant to them of all the power of superintendence, visitation, and government. Is not this a contract? If lands or money had been granted to him and his associates, for the same purposes, such grant could not be rescinded. And is there any difference, in legal contemplation, between a grant of corporate franchises and a grant of tangible property? No such difference is recognized in any decided case, nor does it exist in the common apprehension of mankind.

It is therefore contended, that this case falls within the true meaning of this provision of the Constitution, as expounded in the decisions of this court; that the charter of 1769 is a contract, a stipulation or agreement, mutual in its considerations, express and formal in its terms, and of a most binding

and solemn nature. That the acts in question impair this contract, has been sufficiently shown. They repeal and abrogate its most essential parts.

107. Inductive reasoning. — The deductive method is a very important and useful method of reasoning, but it has its limitations. Its great defect is that, of itself, it is powerless to aid us in the discovery of new truth. Every conclusion we arrive at by this method is but the rendering clear, or the making application of, some particular truth involved in a more general one, and therefore by implication already known. When we wish to find out new truth, to make new generalizations or establish new laws, we must proceed by the inductive method. In inductive reasoning, we start with particular facts or truths known to us from our observation and seek to find some general truth or principle underlying them and giving them meaning or unity.

A conclusion arrived at by the inductive method, once it is established, may be used, of course, as a starting point for a deductive argumentation. Thus a writer, in endeavoring to establish a given truth, may use both the inductive and the deductive methods in one and the same discourse. He may proceed now by means of the one and again by means of the other, using them in succession and each as an aid and support to the other. As a matter of fact, reasoning in this way is much more common than reasoning by the purely inductive, or the purely deductive method. It is the method the mind naturally employs in un-

studied and informal reasoning. "Our thought," says Professor Creighton, "uses every means which will help it to its desired end. It is often able, after pushing its inquiries a little way, to discover some general principle, or to guess what the law of connection must be. When this is possible, it is found profitable to proceed deductively, and to show what results necessarily follow from the truth of such a general law. Of course, it is always essential to verify results obtained in this deductive way, by comparing them with the actual facts. But in general, the best results are obtained when induction and deduction go hand in hand."¹

Inductive reasoning is essentially the endeavor to establish causes for the phenomena which have engaged our attention. When we note facts and seek an explanation of these facts, we reason inductively. In this search for the explanation we desire, our ordinary procedure is first to make a guess as to what that explanation is and then to try to find out whether our guess is correct or not. Thus, in the whole process of inductive reasoning, three distinct steps are distinguishable:

(a) Observation, or the gathering of the particular facts to be used as the basis of the induction.

(b) The making of an hypothesis, or the provisional explanation of the facts.

(c) Verification, or the comparison of deductions from the hypothesis with known facts or principles.

¹ J. E. Creighton, *Introductory Logic*, pp. 174, 175.

It is not to be inferred that these steps are always recognizable in the actual discourse. There, the gathering of the facts is usually regarded as mere preliminary work and is taken for granted. Ordinarily, the writer begins his argumentation with some reference to his hypothesis, which may be stated explicitly at the beginning or left as a matter of inference for the reader. Huxley, for example, after a few prefatory remarks, begins his *Three Lectures on Evolution* thus:

So far as I know, there are only three hypotheses which ever have been entertained, or which well can be entertained, respecting the past history of Nature. I will, in the first place, state the hypotheses, and then I will consider what evidence bearing upon them is in our possession, and by what light of criticism that evidence is to be interpreted.

Upon the first hypothesis, the assumption is, that phenomena of Nature similar to those exhibited by the present world have always existed; in other words, that the universe has existed from all eternity in what may be broadly termed its present condition.

The second hypothesis is, that the present state of things has had only a limited duration; and that, at some period in the past, a condition of the world, essentially similar to that which we now know, came into existence, without any precedent condition from which it could have naturally proceeded. The assumption that successive states of Nature have arisen, each without any relation or natural causation to an antecedent state, is a mere modification of this second hypothesis.

The third hypothesis also assumes that the present state of things has had but a limited duration; but it supposes that

this state has been evolved by a natural process from an antecedent state, and that from another, and so on; and, on this hypothesis, the attempt to assign any limit to the series of past changes is, usually, given up.

The first two hypotheses here are stated, of course, in order that they may be shown to be untenable. Once they are shown to be unenable, there will be a strong presumption in favor of the third.

108. The hypothesis. — The one decisive test of a good hypothesis is its complete accordance with facts. If it is not in agreement with known facts, or is inadequate to the explanation of all the facts it is required to explain, it must be discarded, and some more probable hypothesis adopted. That this test may be applied, however, the hypothesis must be of such a nature as to admit of deductions being made from it. "An hypothesis from which nothing can be deduced, . . . is of no value whatever. It always remains at the stage of mere possibility, and without any real connection with fact. It is a mere guess which has no significance whatever, for it is entirely incapable either of proof or of disproof."¹

Such a useless hypothesis is that, for example, stated first in the following passage:

The adaptation of the external coloring of animals to their condition of life has long been recognized, and has been imputed either to an originally created specific peculiarity, or to the direct action of climate, soil, or food. Where the former explanation has been accepted, it has completely checked

¹ J. E. Creighton, *Introductory Logic*, p. 242.

inquiry, since we could never get any further than the fact of the adaptation. There was nothing more to be known about the matter. The second explanation was soon found to be quite inadequate to deal with all the varied phenomena, and to be contradicted by many well-known facts. For example, wild rabbits are always of gray or brown tints well suited for concealment among grass and fern. But when these rabbits are domesticated, without any change of climate or food, they vary into white or black, and these varieties may be multiplied to any extent, forming white or black races. Exactly the same thing has occurred with pigeons; and in the case of rats and mice, the white variety has not been shown to be at all dependent on alteration of climate, food, or other external conditions. In many cases, the wings of an insect not only assume the exact tint of the bark or leaf it is accustomed to rest on, but the form and veining of the leaf or the exact rugosity of the bark is imitated; and these detailed modifications cannot be reasonably imputed to climate or food, since in many cases the species does not feed on the substance it resembles, and when it does, no reasonable connection can be shown to exist between the supposed cause and the effect produced.¹

109. Verification. — The verification or proof of an hypothesis is essentially a deductive process. In verifying an hypothesis, we reason in some such fashion as this: If this hypothesis is true, then such and such consequences should follow; these consequences, however, do follow — that is, they are in accord with all the known facts bearing on the matter; therefore the hypothesis is true.

The familiar story of how Torricelli proved that the

¹ Alfred Russel Wallace, *Natural Selection*.

air has weight, and incidentally invented the barometer, illustrates the method perfectly. It had been noticed by his master, Galileo, that water would not rise in a suction pump beyond thirty-two or thirty-three feet. Torricelli, in trying to explain why it should rise at all, hit upon the idea that it was because of the pressure of the atmosphere, the weight of the air balancing the column of water. If this were so, he reasoned, then a liquid heavier than water would rise to a less height. Mercury, for instance, which is a little more than ten times heavier than water, would rise less than one tenth as far. On inverting, in a basin of mercury, a glass tube about four feet long and hermetically sealed at one end, he found that the result was as he had conjectured. The mercury in the tube sank to about thirty inches above the level of that in the basin. His hypothesis was thus verified, and the world was benefited by the invention of a very useful instrument.

The verification of the hypothesis should be conducted, it is needless to say, with the utmost care possible. Accurate observations and rigid scrutiny of the facts used is indispensable as a preliminary, since no induction based on doubtful facts can have much validity. But even if the writer is sure of his facts, he needs to be cautioned against generalizing on too narrow a basis. He needs to be cautioned also against the assumption that a single test satisfactorily passed necessarily establishes an hypothesis. In some cases, such as the one just cited, a single test

may be sufficient; but in most cases it is not. It oftens happens that a phenomenon results from a complexity of causes, in which case a number of tests made under varying conditions will be necessary to reveal all the causes. For example, at a given altitude the application of a certain degree of heat to water in an open vessel will cause it to boil; but we cannot therefore infer that water will always boil when brought to this same temperature. At a lower altitude, it will not boil until a higher temperature is reached. In other words, pressure as well as heat must be taken into account in determining the boiling point of a fluid.

To guard against error, therefore, the tests employed in verifying an hypothesis should be as many and as varied as possible. Moreover, wherever it is convenient, experiment should be used as an aid to observation. When we can control the conditions under which a phenomenon occurs, we can the more readily determine the cause of that phenomenon.

110. Evidence. — A proposition to be argued is a matter which is in doubt; and to convert it from a matter of doubt to a matter of certainty, something must be brought forward in its support. Anything so brought forward, that is, anything used as a means of inducing belief in the truth of the proposition, is called an argument, or sometimes, as in courts of law, evidence. The whole body of arguments or evidence used to establish the truth of a proposition is called the proof.

III. Kinds of arguments. — A thoroughly satisfactory classification of arguments is not easy to find. Perhaps the most convenient, on the whole, is that which groups them as follows: (a) arguments from antecedent probability, (b) arguments from sign, (c) arguments from testimony, and (d) arguments from analogy.

(a.) *The argument from antecedent probability.*—The argument from antecedent probability is one drawn from the relation of a cause or a necessary condition to an effect. It tries to account for the fact or circumstance in debate by bringing forward some other fact or circumstance preceding it and related to it as cause is related to effect. It infers what is likely to happen from what has happened, what is likely to be true from what is admittedly true.

The value of the argument from antecedent probability depends largely upon the clearness with which the cause and effect relation is brought out. If that relation is made unmistakable, the force of the argument is very great, since it establishes a strong presumption in favor of the proposition to be proved. Of itself, however, it is not conclusive. Thus, in a murder case, while it is very important that the accused be shown to have had a motive for committing the crime, the fact that he had a motive would not of itself prove that he committed the murder. That a thing is likely to happen is no proof that it has actually happened. The argument from antecedent probability, therefore, though a strong argument,

must always be supported by arguments of another kind.

(b.) *The argument from sign.*—The argument from sign is the opposite of the argument from antecedent probability. It is based, in general, upon the relation of effect to cause. It tries to account for the fact in dispute by bringing forward other facts or circumstances which are indisputable, but which themselves can be satisfactorily accounted for only on the supposition that the fact in dispute is true. From an effect, it infers a cause or necessary condition of that effect. Thus, the existence of ice in a pool of water on a spring morning is an indication of a freezing temperature the night before; the fact that the clothes of a man accused of murder are found to be bloody, is an indication that he is guilty of the crime charged against him.

The force of this argument varies with circumstances. A single argument from sign may be so weak as to be almost valueless as proof; again, it may be absolutely conclusive. For example, the fact that a man was alive on the twentieth of the month proves conclusively that he did not die on the nineteenth. In general, the force of the argument comes from the cumulative effect of a number of signs all pointing in the same direction.

(c.) *The argument from testimony.*—Testimonial evidence is that given by a witness or observer of the fact or matter at issue. It may, of course, be either oral or written. Any oral statement or written ac-

count relating directly to the existence of a given fact is, when used as evidence to prove that fact, testimonial evidence.

It is a popular supposition that testimonial evidence is, from its very nature, much more convincing than circumstantial evidence. As Huxley points out, however, this view is an unwarranted one:

Suppose that a man tells you that he saw a person strike another and kill him; that is testimonial evidence of the fact of murder. But it is possible to have circumstantial evidence of the fact of murder; that is to say, you may find a man dying with a wound upon his head having exactly the form and character of the wound which is made by an axe, and, with due care in taking surrounding circumstances into account, you may conclude with the utmost certainty that the man has been murdered; that his death is the consequence of a blow inflicted by another man with that implement. We are very much in the habit of considering circumstantial evidence as of less value than testimonial evidence, and it may be that, where the circumstances are not perfectly clear and intelligible, it is a dangerous and unsafe kind of evidence; but it must not be forgotten that, in many cases, circumstantial is quite as conclusive as testimonial evidence, and that, not unfrequently, it is a great deal weightier than testimonial evidence. For example, take the case to which I referred just now. The circumstantial evidence may be better and more convincing than the testimonial evidence; for it may be impossible, under the conditions that I have defined, to suppose that the man met his death from any cause but the violent blow of an axe wielded by another man. The circumstantial evidence in favor of a murder having been committed, in that case, is as complete and as convincing as evidence can be. It is evidence which is open to no doubt and to no falsification. But the

testimony of a witness is open to multitudinous doubts. He may have been mistaken. He may have been actuated by malice. It has constantly happened that even an accurate man has declared that a thing has happened in this, that, or the other way, when a careful analysis of the circumstantial evidence has shown that it did not happen in that way, but in some other way.¹

The value of testimonial evidence depends entirely upon the character and ability of the witness. A false or incompetent witness can, of course, prove nothing. In estimating the force of this kind of evidence, therefore, one should always take into account, first, the ability of the witness to observe accurately and report clearly, and, second, the reputation of the witness for veracity.

A variety of the argument from testimony is that known as the argument from authority, wherein the unsupported assertion of the witness is accepted as decisive with regard to the question at issue. It is employed, usually, in cases where the question is not one of mere fact, but rather of the interpretation of a fact. Its force depends upon the universality with which the witness is regarded as an authority on the matter in question.

(d.) *The argument from analogy.* — The argument from analogy is based on the assumption that what is true of one thing is probably true of another thing which resembles it closely in one or more important particulars. Arguing from analogy is thus a kind

¹ Huxley, *Three Lectures on Evolution*.

of inducto-deductive method of reasoning. "In analogy, we do not stop to work out a law of connection between phenomena by comparing a number of cases, or by using any of the ordinary inductive canons. But finding a striking resemblance between some circumstance — quality, arrangement, function, etc. — in the phenomena to be explained, and some phenomena with which we are already acquainted, we use the latter as a basis for conclusions about the former."¹ Thus, if we infer that there is vegetable and animal life on the planet Mars because the conditions which obtain on that planet are very much like those which obtain on our own, we are using the argument from analogy.

The force of this argument depends wholly on the kind and degree of resemblance between the things compared. If the resemblance is superficial or fanciful, the argument has no weight whatever. Thus, though there is a certain resemblance between a great metropolis and the heart of an animal, that resemblance is not close enough to warrant us in inferring that, because the circulation of the blood in the heart is controlled in a certain way, therefore the traffic in the metropolis should be controlled in much the same way. The resemblance must be real — that is, it must lie in essentials — before any valid inference can be drawn from one thing to the other. Even in such cases, the argument from analogy is never very weighty. At best, it can but establish a strong proba-

¹ J. E. Creighton, *Introductory Logic*, p. 223.

bility; it can never be conclusive. We might, for example, be able to show that the conditions on the planet Mars were almost identical with those obtaining on the earth; but that would not be proving that Mars was inhabited by living beings, much less by human beings like ourselves.

Reasoning from analogy is, however, by no means to be discredited. It can never, indeed, demonstrate to a certainty, and at times it may even be misleading; yet on the whole it has been found to be a practically valuable method of reasoning. It is peculiarly adapted to furnish hints or starting-points for new lines of investigation. In the field of scientific research, analogy has often pointed the way to new discoveries or new applications of familiar laws and principles. It was reasoning by analogy that enabled Darwin, for example, to hit upon his famous theory of natural selection. In studying the methods of breeders of plants and animals, selection, he observed, was the clue to their success. To improve a variety, they uniformly selected the best, — that is, the fittest for the particular purpose in view, — and allowed those only to survive and propagate their kind. Why might not, he reasoned, the same principle hold true in nature? Why might there not be an improvement of races or varieties by natural, as well as by artificial selection? The hint thus obtained led ultimately to the theory, now accepted as a truth by virtually all scientists, that species owe their origin to a process of natural selection.

112. Refutation. — Argumentation may be destructive as well as constructive. That is, its aim may be to prove a proposition false equally as well as to prove it true. Argumentation of this kind, especially that which consists in showing that there is something wrong with an opponent's conclusions, is usually called refutation.

There is nothing specifically distinct in the methods employed by refutation. The same process used in proving a proposition may be used in disproving it, provided different premises or different arguments are resorted to. Perhaps the most distinct, as it certainly is one of the favorite, methods of refuting an opponent's arguments is to show that they are inconsistent with themselves, or lead to manifest absurdities when carried to their logical conclusion.

A passage from Webster's *Reply to Hayne* well illustrates the method. Senator Hayne, with others of his party, contended that "in case of a plain, palpable violation of the Constitution by the general government, a State may interpose; and that this interposition is constitutional."¹ In the course of his reply, Webster cited the tariff of 1828 and observed as follows:

The tariff is a usurpation; it is a dangerous usurpation; it is a palpable usurpation; it is a deliberate usurpation. It is such a usurpation, therefore, as calls upon the States to exercise their right of interference. Here is a case, then, within the gentleman's principles. It is a case for action. The

¹ See *Webster's Great Speeches*, p. 256.

Constitution is plainly, dangerously, palpably, and deliberately violated; and the States must interpose their own authority to arrest the law. Let us suppose the State of South Carolina to express this same opinion, by the voice of her legislature. That would be very imposing; but what then? Is the voice of one State conclusive? It so happens that, at the very moment when South Carolina resolves that the tariff laws are unconstitutional, Pennsylvania and Kentucky resolve exactly the reverse. They hold those laws to be both highly proper and strictly constitutional. And now, Sir, how does the honorable member propose to deal with this case? How does he relieve us from this difficulty, upon any principle of his? His construction gets us into it; how does he propose to get us out?

In Carolina, the tariff is a palpable, deliberate usurpation; Carolina, therefore, may nullify it, and refuse to pay the duties. In Pennsylvania, it is both clearly constitutional and highly expedient; and there the duties are to be paid. And yet we live under a government of uniform laws, and under a Constitution too, which contains an express provision, as it happens, that all duties shall be equal in all the States. Does not this approach absurdity?

113. Fallacies. — To reason soundly and logically one must not only arrive at right conclusions, but arrive at them in right ways. A fallacy, or mistake in the reasoning, invalidates, of course, the conclusion depending upon it.

Fallacies may take various forms. Most common, perhaps, are the following: (*a*) the fallacy of the ambiguous term, (*b*) the fallacy of begging the question, (*c*) the fallacy of arguing beside the point, and (*d*) the fallacy of hasty generalization.

(a.) *The fallacy of the ambiguous term.* — This consists in the use of a general term in one sense in the premises and in another in the conclusion. It is a very common and often a very subtle fallacy, inasmuch as the ambiguity not infrequently lends itself readily to concealment. Such a flagrant use of the ambiguous term as is involved in the following, however, would deceive no one:

The study of literature is a moral virtue, because the study of literature is humanity, and humanity is a moral virtue.

(b.) *The fallacy of begging the question.* — This consists in taking for granted something that has to be proved. The most common form in which it occurs is in the use of what are called question-begging epithets. Thus if, in attacking the acts or policies of a political opponent, we begin by calling them "nefarious" or "unstatesmanlike" and then proceed to condemn them *as* nefarious or unstatesmanlike, we obviously assume what we started out to prove. Beware of the use of the question-begging epithet.

(c.) *The fallacy of arguing beside the point.* — It sometimes happens that, either by accident or design, a disputant, finding it hard to prove the proposition he started with, proves some other proposition very much like it and assumes that this proposition is virtually the same as that he wished to prove. In such a case, he is said to argue beside the point, or ignore the point at issue.

(d.) *The fallacy of hasty generalization.*— This consists in generalizing on too narrow a basis of fact. Many people, observing that a phenomenon occurs a number of times under given conditions, are prone to leap to the conclusion at once and without further investigation that it will always occur under those conditions. Hasty generalization of this kind constitutes the great danger in the inductive method of reasoning, and should be especially guarded against.

EXERCISES

- i. Comment upon the validity of the following syllogisms:
 - a. All valid syllogisms have three terms.
This syllogism has three terms.
Therefore this syllogism is valid.
 - b. To take profit is to take advantage.
But to take advantage of any one is wrong.
Therefore to take profit is wrong.
 - c. He who is content with what he has is truly rich.
No envious man is content with what he has.
No envious man, therefore, is truly rich.
 - d. If this candidate used money to secure his election, he deserved defeat.
But he did not use money for this purpose.
Therefore he did not deserve defeat.
 - e. Whatever abridges liberty abridges happiness.
But law abridges liberty.
Therefore law abridges happiness.
 - f. No sensible man is indifferent to money.
This man is not indifferent to money.
Therefore he is a sensible man.

2. Is the reasoning in the following sound?

- a. "He has no appreciation of beauty, for he has no taste for pictures."
- b. "War is a blessing, not an evil. Show me the nation that has ever become great without blood-letting."
- c. "No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable except that each person, as far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. . . . Each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of persons."

3. How would you meet the following line of argument?

"Restrictive laws always land us in this dilemma: either you admit that they produce scarcity, or you do not. If you admit it, you avow by the admission that you inflict on the people all the injury in your power. If you do not admit it, you deny having restricted supply and raised prices, and consequently you deny having favored the producer."

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES

1. Is it advisable for a man to try to work his way through college?
2. Is the awarding of prizes or medals for excellence in studies conducive to good scholarship?
3. Should gymnastics be compulsory at college?
4. Should college authorities allow students to manage their sports as they see fit?

SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR THEMES 239

5. Ought the college course for the degree of A. B. to be shortened?

6. Ought the student who neglects to do his work at the proper time to be allowed the chance of making it up at the last moment?

7. Should students be allowed to carry as much work as they please?

8. Is the large city or the small one the better location for a university?

9. Would it be advisable to include manual training in the course for the A. B. degree?

10. Did the United States government act wisely in recognizing the republic of Panama?

11. Should United States senators be elected by popular vote?

12. Should the United States still further restrict immigration?

13. The federal government should pass a law requiring the accounts of all corporations doing an interstate business to be examined periodically.

14. The federal government should have supervision over the life insurance business.

15. Should the United States have retained the Isle of Pines?

16. The United States should grant the Philippine Islands independence.

17. State judges should be appointed rather than elected.

18. Is the English occupation of Egypt justifiable?

19. Was the war with Spain justifiable?

20. The multi-millionaire is a menace to society.

21. Electricity will eventually supersede steam as a motive power.

22. Have strikes on the whole improved the position of the laboring classes?

23. Should a law be passed requiring strikes to be settled by arbitration?

24. Should intercollegiate athletic contests be abolished?

25. Should students in good standing be disqualified from taking part in intercollegiate contests because at one time they may have earned money by their athletic skill?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION

The marks ordinarily used in punctuating a sentence are the notes of interrogation and exclamation, the period, the colon, the semicolon, the comma, and the dash.

1. The note of interrogation. — This mark, as its name implies, is used after questions; and every direct question should be indicated by this mark.

2. The note of exclamation. — This mark is used at the end of every ejaculatory sentence or expression of intense feeling.

3. The period. — The period is used at the end of every declaratory sentence and after every abbreviation.

4. The colon. — The main uses of the colon are as follows:

(a.) To introduce formal statements and quotations.

Examples:

The capital and leading questions on which you must this day decide are these two: First, whether you ought to concede; and secondly, what your concession ought to be.

And he adds: "There, it seems to me, is the great merit of the English poets."

(b.) To separate coördinate parts of a sentence when they are set off against each other sharply, or

when the relation between them is less intimate than would be indicated by the use of a semicolon.

Examples:

Man's face he did not fear: God he always feared.

And this was not because he was an "uncommunicating egotist," though he amuses himself with saying so to Miss Fuller: egotism is the strongest of passions, and he was altogether passionless.

The hand of death was upon him: he knew it; and the only wish which he uttered was that he might die sword in hand.

5. The semicolon. — The main uses of the semicolon are as follows:

(a.) To separate coördinate clauses in a compound sentence when those clauses are not very intimately related.

Example:

He must decline any discussion with them; he did not want their assistance; he had fixed on a person to take charge of his measure in the House of Commons.

(b.) To separate coördinate clauses in a compound sentence when those clauses are somewhat complicated in structure.

Example:

His mind, before he became first minister, had been, as we have said, in an unsound state; and physical and moral causes now concurred to make the derangement of his faculties complete.

(c.) To separate clauses in a series when those clauses are not very simple in structure.

Example:

It may be urged that the copiousness of Newman at times becomes wearisome; that he is over-liberal of both explanation and illustration; and that his style, though never exuberant in ornament, is sometimes annoyingly luminous, and blinds with excess of light.

6. The comma. — The main uses of the comma are as follows:

(a.) To separate words or phrases in a series.¹

Example:

He is tall, straight, and as sinewy as an athlete.

(b.) To separate simple clauses of the same kind.

Examples:

After this she said nothing, and for several minutes he painted rapidly and in silence.

I closed all the shutters, extinguished the lights, and then quietly let myself out by the side door.

(c.) To mark off subordinate clauses not intimately and logically connected with the structure of the main clause of the sentence.

Examples:

He glanced at the door, which was slightly ajar, and paused.

If I had run after the birds only to write about them, I

¹ Usage varies here, the comma before *and* introducing the last member of the series sometimes being omitted.

246 PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION

never should have written anything that any one would have cared to read.

If I have not shrunk from saying that we must have sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible.

(d.) To mark off words and phrases intercalated or inserted within the body of the sentence.

Examples:

This, however, he refused to do.

His influence, to be sure, is much greater than mine.

(e.) To indicate ellipsis or omission of necessary words.

Example:

Homer was the greater genius; Virgil, the better artist.

(f.) To indicate apposition.

Example:

Milton's greatest work, the *Paradise Lost*, is one of the greatest works in English literature.

(g.) To indicate transposition of parts from their natural position.

Example:

With these associates and others of the same class, Frederic loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares.

7. **The dash.** — The dash is the mark of abruptness. It is used mainly to indicate an abrupt change in

the course of the sentence, or to mark off parenthetical matter abruptly inserted within the body of the sentence. It is also used occasionally to reinforce other marks.

Examples:

With Emerson it is ever the special capacity for moral experience — always that and only that.

These little histories — the first volumes, if I mistake not, that introduced Mr. Stevenson to lovers of good writing — abound in charming illustrations of his disposition to look at the world as a not exactly refined but glorified, pacified Bohemia.

8. Capitalization. — A capital letter should be used at the beginning of:

- a.* The first word of every sentence.
- b.* The first word of every line of poetry.
- c.* The first word of a formal quotation; for example: And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's own words: "Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."
- d.* The names of persons, places, and countries, and of adjectives derived from these names; for example: Milton. England, French.
- e.* Words referring to the Deity.
- f.* Names of the days of the week and of the months.
- g.* Names of things personified.
- h.* Names of notable events or things to be especially distinguished; for example: the Stamp Act, the Civil War.

248 PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION

i. Words used as titles when prefixed to the names of persons; for example: Professor Smith, the Hon. John Jones, the Rev. James Brown.

j. The names of the points of the compass when used as place names.

k. The pronoun I and the interjection O.

APPENDIX II

WORDS AND PHRASES COMMONLY MISUSED

Above. Should not be used as an adjective or as a noun. Say, "the foregoing statement" or "the statement made above," rather than "the above statement."

Affect — Effect. Should not be confounded: *affect* means *to influence*; *effect* means *to bring about*.

Aggravate. Not to be used in the sense of *irritate*, *provoke*; it properly means *to add weight to*, *to intensify*.

Allow. Should not be used in the sense of *think*, *assert*, *declare*.

Alone — Only. The different uses of these two words should be carefully distinguished; *alone* should be used only when the meaning is *solitary*, *unaccompanied*.

Alternative. Not synonymous with *course*; should be used with reference to two things only.

Appreciate. The word means *to estimate justly*, *to value at real worth*; such an expression, therefore, as "I appreciate highly," should be avoided.

Apparent — Evident. Should be distinguished. That which seems to be so, is *apparent*; that which not only seems to be so, but really is so, is *evident*.

Apt — Likely — Liable. *Apt* implies natural tendency, fitness; *likely*, mere probability; *liable*, exposure to unpleasant consequences. For example: "It is apt to be cold there in midwinter." "He is likely to meet his match if he challenges everybody." "He is liable to punishment."

As. Wrongly used in such expressions as "I do not know as he will"; it should be, "I do not know that he will."

Avocation. Not synonymous with *vocation*; properly means *something aside from one's regular calling*.

Balance. Should not be used in the sense of *remainder*.

Beside — Besides. Not properly synonymous; *beside* means *by the side of*; *besides* means *in addition to, moreover*.

Between. Should be used with reference to two things only.

Bound. Should not be used in the sense of *determined, doomed*.

But what — But that. Frequently misused. For example:

“I do not know but what (should be *but that*) he is there.”

“I do not doubt but that (should be *that*) you are right.”

Can — May. Not to be confounded. *Can* implies ability; *may*, permission.

Claim. Should not be used in the sense of *say, assert*.

Climax. Often loosely used in the sense of *acme, highest point*; it properly means *ascent, gradual increase in height or intensity*.

Completed. Wrongly used in such phrases as “light-complected”; the proper expression is “of a light complexion,” or “light-complexioned.”

Condign. Not to be used in the sense of *severe*; it properly means *merited*.

Connect to. Frequently misused for *connect with*.

Continual — Continuous. The former means *frequently repeated*; the latter means *uninterrupted*.

Demean. Should not be used in the sense of *lower, degrade*.

Depot — Station. Commonly regarded as synonymous; but the tendency now is to restrict the former to the sense of *place of deposit for goods*, and to use the latter for the meaning *waiting-place for passengers*.

Different than — Different to. Write “other than,” or “different from.”

Due — Owing. The words should be carefully distinguished. When the idea to be expressed is indebtedness, or the result or effect of a cause, *due* should be used. For example: “A certain respect is due to gray hairs.” “In the mind of a savage every effect is believed to be due to a special worker.”

Owing. On the other hand, when the meaning is "on account of," *owing* should be used. For example: "It is owing to his daring that the enemy was checked."

Enthuse. A word to be avoided.

Emigrant — Immigrant. Sometimes confounded. Persons leaving a country are emigrants; persons entering a country, immigrants.

Evidence — Testimony — Proof. *Evidence* is anything that tends to convince; *testimony*, evidence given by witnesses, either orally or in writing; *proof*, whatever establishes the truth of a proposition.

Get to go. Common in some parts of the country, but to be avoided. Say, "I was unable to go," or "I was prevented from going," rather than "I could not get to go."

Healthy — Healthful — Wholesome. *Healthy* means *in a condition of health*; *healthful* means *conducive to health*; *wholesome* means *that which is in itself sound and which promotes health*.

Hung. Often misused for *hanged* when the meaning is *executed on the gallows*.

Ideal. Not to be used in the sense of *perfect, beautiful*; it properly means *that which exists in idea only*.

Illy. Should be avoided; *ill* itself is an adverb.

Implicit. Should not be used in the sense of *unbounded*; its original meaning is *involved*, whence it comes to have the meaning *inferred, tacitly included though not explicitly expressed*.

In. Often misused with verbs of motion for *into*. Say, "He threw it into the fire," not "in the fire."

Inaugurate. Should be used only in the sense of *begin with ceremony*.

Inside of. Often misused for *within*.

Lay. Often misused in an intransitive sense for *lie*.

Learn. Not to be used in the sense of *teach*.

Less. With reference to numbers, use *fewer* instead of *less*.

Like. Often misused for *as if*. Say, "It looks *as if* the odds were against us," not "It looks *like* the odds were against us."

Loan. Not to be used in the sense of *lend*.

Locate. Should not be used in the sense of *settle, fix one's habitation*.

Lots of. The phrase should be avoided.

Mad. Should not be used in the sense of *angry*.

Most. Often misused for *almost*. Say, "He is almost always at home," not "most always."

Myself. Not to be used as equivalent to *I*. Say, "John and I went for a walk," not "John and myself."

Near-by. Should not be used as an adjective.

Nice. Should be used only in the sense of *delicate, discriminating*.

Nothing like as. Sometimes used improperly for *not nearly so*. For example: "It is nothing like as (should be *not nearly so*) bad as that."

Off of. The *of* is superfluous.

Onto. Often used where *upon* or *on to* would be better.

Partake of. Not to be used in the sense of *eat*; it properly means *to share*.

Party. Should not be used, except in legal documents, in the sense of *person*.

Patron. Often misused for *customer*, as *patronage* is also for *custom*.

Plenty. Should not be used as an adjective or an adverb.

Posted. Should not be used in the sense of *informed*.

Preventative. Should be avoided; *preventive* is better.

Privilege — Right A *privilege* is a special advantage granted or conceded to the one who enjoys it; a *right* is that which is one's due, that to which one may lay just claim.

Propose — Purpose. Sometimes confounded. *Propose* means *to put forward for discussion or consideration*; *purpose* means *to intend, design*.

- Raise.** Often misused for *rear, bring up*.
- Real.** Not to be used adverbially in the sense of *very*.
- Referee.** Not to be used as a verb.
- Section.** Often misused for *neighborhood, district, region*.
- Set.** Often improperly used in an intransitive sense for *sit*.
- Settle.** Should not be used in the sense of *pay*; it means *to fix, to establish, to adjust*.
- Sleeper.** Very generally misused for *sleeping-car*.
- Some.** Often misused for *somewhat*. For example: "He is some (should be *somewhat*) better."
- State.** Should not be used as equivalent to *say*; it means *to set forth, to set down in detail*.
- Stop.** Often misused for *stay*. Say, "He is staying at the Sherman House," not "stopping."
- Suicide.** Should not be used as a verb.
- Suspicion.** Not to be used as a verb.
- These kind.** A common error. Say, "People of this kind irritate me," rather than "These kind of people."
- This much.** *Thus much* is better.
- Through.** Should not be used in the sense of *finished*.
- Transpire.** Should not be used in the sense of *happen*; it means *to become known*.
- Underhanded.** *Underhand* is better.
- Unique.** Often misused; properly means *unlike anything else*.
- Verbal.** Very frequently misused for *oral*. For example: "He would not trust himself to write her a note, but sent her a verbal (should be *oral*) message instead."
- Way.** Often used improperly. Say "away back," not "way back" "a long way off," not "a long ways off."
- While.** Often misused for *though; while* as a conjunction should be used only where the idea of time comes in, either expressly or by implication.
- Without.** Often improperly used for *unless*. Say, "He would not go unless I went with him," not "without I went."

INDEX

- Accuracy, 95.
 Æsop, Fable from, 152.
 Alliteration, 113.
 Ambiguous term, The, 235, 236.
 Analogy, The argument from, 231.
 Andersen, Hans Christian, *The Little Match Girl*, 156.
 Antecedent probability, 228.
 Apostrophe, 106.
 Arguing beside the point, 235, 236.
 Argumentation, Definition of, 206.
 Arguments, Kinds of, 228.
 Arnold, Matthew, length of sentence in *Culture and Anarchy*, 65.
 Arrangement, of material in the discourse, 18; of details in description, 133.
 Artistic description, 132.
 Association of ideas, The laws of, 19, 20.
 Authority, The argument from, 231.
 Baker, G. P., *Principles of Argumentation*, 209.
 Balanced sentence, 83.
 Bates, Arlo, summing up the gist of a paragraph, 40, 41; on repetition, 115.
 Begging the question, 235, 236.
 Beginning of the discourse, 26.
 Belief, Ways of inducing, 208.
 Beside the point, Arguing, 235, 236.
 Bifurcate classification, 201.
 Borrowing thought, 12.
 Burroughs, John, sketching from nature, 13, 14; essay on *Dr. Johnson and Carlyle*, 21.
 Carlyle, *Life of Sterling*, 149.
 Characterization, 159.
 Chronicle, The Anglo-Saxon, 151.
 Circumlocution, 119.
 Classification, of paragraphs, 34; of sentences, 58, 80; of compositions, 121; requisites of a good, 199; bifurcate, 201.
 Clearness, in the discourse in general, 90; in exposition, 203.
 Coherence, in the discourse, 18; in the paragraph, 41; in the sentence, 68.
 Composition, The whole, 10; meaning of the term, 10.
 Conciseness, 108.
 Congruity, 110.
 Connotation, 101.
 Conviction, 210.
 Creighton, J. E., *Introductory Logic*, 222, 224, 232.

- Dartmouth College Case, The, 217.
- Darwin, Charles, *Origin of Species*, 66, 182, 207.
- Definition, loose, 186; logical, 187; requisites of a good, 188; methods of exposition by, 190.
- Denotation, 101.
- DeQuincey, *Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow*, 114.
- Description, definition of, 125; relation to other forms of discourse, 126; kinds of, 130; scientific, 130; artistic, 132; indirect, 144; vividness in, 146.
- Details, in description, 133, 134; in narration, 170.
- Dialogue, 176.
- Dickens, *Hard Times*, 171.
- Digressions in the narrative, 170.
- Discourse, the, coherence in, 18; planning, 19; purpose of, 10; theme of, 16; title of, 17; units of, 10; unity of, 15; proportion in, 25.
- Division, 197.
- Elements of narration, 155.
- Eliot, George, *Middlemarch*, 148.
- Emerson, on reading creatively, 14.
- Emphasis, in the paragraph, 54; in the sentence, 78.
- Ending, of the discourse in general, 27; of the narrative, 176.
- Enthymemes, 216.
- Evidence, 227, 229.
- Exposition, definition of, 179; relation to other forms of discourse, 181; kinds of, 182; by definition, 183; by classification, 194.
- Euphony, 111.
- Fallacies, 235.
- Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 144.
- Figures of speech, 103.
- Force, 100.
- Garrick, acting of, 144.
- Generalization, 195; hasty, 235.
- Genung, J. F., *Working Principles of Rhetoric*, 4.
- Grammatical errors, 68.
- Grammar, relation to rhetoric, 4, 5.
- Hamerton, P. G., "On the Difficulty of Discovering Fixed Laws," 195.
- Hasty generalization, Fallacy of, 235, 237.
- Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables*, 135, 138; *The Scarlet Letter*, 142, 168.
- Hearn, Lafcadio, *Two Years in the French West Indies*, 142, 203; *Japan: An Interpretation*, 192; *Out of the East*, 148.
- Hughes, Thomas, *Tom Brown at Oxford*, 173.
- Huxley, *The Physical Basis of Life*, 97; *Three Lectures on Evolution*, 182, 223, 231.
- Hyperbole, 106.
- Hypothesis, 222, 224.

Individuality in the discourse, 12.
Inferences, 213.
Invention, 11, 12.
Irony, 106.
Irrelevant matter, 15.
Irving, *Rip Van Winkle*, 46.

Kipling, *The City of Dreadful Night*, 143.

Laughlin, J. Lawrence, *Large Fortunes*, 199.

Length, of paragraph, 53; of the sentence, 65.

Loose, construction in the sentence, 73; sentence, 82.

Lowell, beginning of the essay on *Emerson the Lecturer*, 27.

Macaulay, unified paragraph from, 39; coördination of sentences and clauses in paragraph from, 63; length of sentence in the *Essay on Milton*, 65.

Material, selection of, 11; arrangement of, 18; sources of, 11.

Matthews, Brander, *Vignettes from Manhattan*, 21, 29.

Metaphor, The, 104.

Metonymy, 105.

Minto, W., *Manual of English Prose Literature*, 81.

Models, Use of, 6.

Movement, in description, 139; in narration, 172.

Muir, John, *Our National Parks*, 132.

Narration, definition of, 72; relation to other forms of discourse, 153; kinds of, 154; elements of, 155; point of view in, 167.

Narrowing the subject, 16.

Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 65, 185, 211; "What is a University," 190.

Observation, cultivating habits of, 14; as a basis of induction, 222.

Order of events, 171.

Paragraph, the, definition of, 32; structure of, 38; classification of, 34; unity in, 38; coherence in, 41; typical scheme of, 43; topic of, 44, 45; parallel construction in, 50; proportion in, 53; emphasis in, 54.

Paragraphing, Reasons for, 32, 33.

Parallel Construction in the paragraph, 50.

Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, 84.

Participles, Carelessness in the use of, 70.

Partition, 202.

Periodic sentence, The, 80.

Personification, 105.

Persuasion, 209.

Peters, J. P., *Nippur*, 145.

Phrasing, 107.

Plagiarism, 12.

Planning the discourse, 19; rule to remember in, 23.

Pleonasm, 109.

Plot, 155.

- Poe, *The Gold Bug*, 165.
- Point at issue, Importance of making clear the, 212.
- Point of view, in the paragraph, 49; in description, 134; changing, 140; in narration, 167.
- Precept and practice in writing, 7.
- Premises, 214; establishment of the, 217.
- Presumption, The, 212.
- Proportion, in the discourse, 25; in the paragraph, 53.
- Proposition, The, 210.
- Provincialisms, 92.
- Punctuation, 243; faulty, 76.
- Purpose of the discourse, 10.
- Reading critically or creatively, 14.
- Reasoning, methods of, 212; deductive, 214; inductive, 221.
- Redundancy, 108.
- Reference words, Carelessness in the use of, 69.
- Refutation, 234.
- Rhetoric, definition of, 3; distinguished from grammar, 4.
- Selection, of material in the discourse, 11; of details in description, 133; of details in narration, 168.
- Scientific description, 65.
- Sentence, the, definition of, 58; classification of, 58, 80; unity in, 61; coherence in, 68; emphasis in, 78; periodic, 80; loose, 82; balanced, 83.
- Setting, 164.
- Shall and will, Confusion of, 70.
- Sign, Argument from, 229.
- Simile, The, 104.
- Slang, 93.
- Sources of material, 11.
- Stead, W. T., *The Destiny of South Africa*, 28.
- Stevenson, R. L., on learning to write, 7, 8; on the apt choice of words, 89; on alliteration, 113; length of sentence in *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Treasure Island*, 65, 66; *Silverado Squatters*, 85, 132; *Edinburgh*, 135; *Across the Plains*, 147; *A Gossip on Romance*, 160; *The Treasure of Franchard*, 161.
- Style, 89.
- Subject, Narrowing the, 16.
- Suspense, in the sentence, 80; in narration, 172.
- Syllogism, The, 214.
- Synecdoche, 105.
- Tautology, 109.
- Tenses, Lack of consistency in the use of, 71.
- Term, the familiar vs. the learned, 103; the specific vs. the general, 103; the figurative vs. the literal, 103; the ambiguous, 235.
- Testimony, The argument from, 229.
- Theme, The, 16.
- Thoreau, *Cape Cod*, 147.
- Thurston, R. H., *Heat as a Form of Energy*, 47.

- Title of the discourse, 17.
- Topic of the paragraph, Methods of developing the, 45,
- Toricelli and the suction pump, 226.
- Transitions, 24.
- Units of the discourse, 10.
- Unity, in the discourse, 15; in the paragraph, 38; in the sentence, 61.
- Usage, good, 91; difference of, 93.
- Variety, in sentence structure, 83; in phrasing, 114.
- Verification, 222, 224.
- Wallace, A. R., *Natural Selection*, 179.
- Webster, *The Dartmouth College Case*, 217; *The Reply to Hayne*, 234.
- Will, Confusion of shall and, 70.
- Words, choice of, 90; foreign and obsolete, 94; newly coined, 95.
- Words and phrases, 89.

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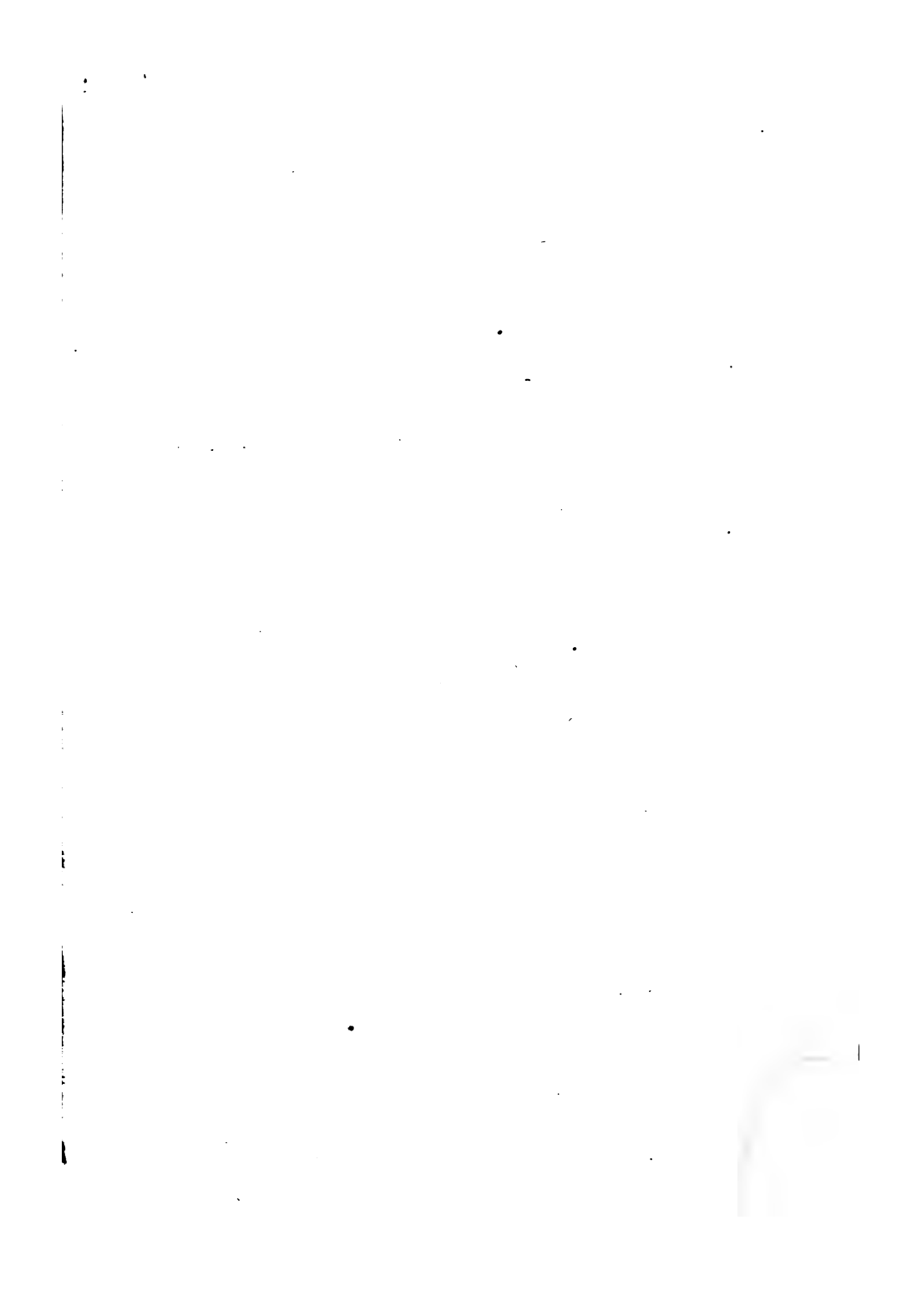
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